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The Globalization of Hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer

Contesting Contemplation

CHRISTOPHER D. L. JOHNSON

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Chapter 1

Introduction

But the thing is, the marvelous thing is, when you first start doing it [the Jesus Prayer], you don't even have to have faith in what you're doing. I mean even if you're terribly embarrassed about the whole thing, it's perfectly alright. I mean you're not insulting anybody or anything. In other words, nobody asks you to believe a single thing when you first start out. You don't even have to think about what you're saying, the starets said. All you have to have in the beginning is quantity. Then, later on, it becomes quality by itself.

If you're going to say the Jesus prayer, at least say it to Jesus [. . .]. Keep him in your mind if you say it, and him only, and him as he was not as you'd like him to have been. [. . .] I can't see [. . .] how you can pray to a Jesus you don't even understand [. . .] what's really inexcusable is that you don't try to understand him. [. . .] When you don't see Jesus for exactly what he was, you miss the whole point of the Jesus prayer. If you don't understand Jesus, you can't understand his prayer – you don't get the prayer at all, you just get some kind of organized cant.

These quotes come from the two title characters in the J. D. Salinger novel *Franny and Zooey* (1962: 37, 168). This book plays a significant role in the history of the Jesus Prayer, but here the quotes, although fictional, are meant to illustrate two conflicting views of the central practices in this book: the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, which both describe aspects of an Orthodox tradition of inner prayer that was fully developed by the fourteenth century. The two excerpts also provide a suitable point of entry into the issues dealt with in this work: they serve as a vivid example of the complex tensions that have resulted from the gradual escape of these practices from their original Orthodox Christian[1] monastic settings into the wider world. The interpretational fallout that has resulted from this process is paralleled in other similar situations when such a local practice goes global and enters a wider sphere of contestation.

This change of setting and the subsequent influence of new worldviews on interpretations of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm have led to shifting, and often conflicting, views of the practices. As a result of their spread into increasingly diverse global settings, these practices have been invoked and adopted by groups that differ in their fundamental assumptions about the general nature of authority and tradition and make competing claims regarding the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. In other words, the present claim is that, along with a global geographical shift, the practices have undergone a global shift in their interpretative framework and conceptualizing of tradition and authority. Rather than writing from within the same tradition and being subject to a particular shared authority, with a similar understanding of each, many of those currently writing about the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm come from a range of traditions, exist under a variety of authorities, and have various understandings of these traditions and authorities. This interpretative shift can be most clearly seen in disagreements on specific issues such as how the hesychasm is related to other forms of interior prayer and how it relates to the wider Orthodox tradition.

To unpack this claim of geographic and interpretative shift, it will be helpful to ask several relevant questions: *What* exactly is it that has shifted, or what are the practices in question? *How* has this shift occurred? *Where* have the practices spread? How are the practices *interpreted* in various settings? What are the key *issues* that distinguish these interpretations? These questions also give a rough structure and chapter outline to the presentation. In the course of looking at the contextual and interpretative shift of the practices, more general issues and debates will come to the fore and help to situate the current topic in a broader scholarly context.

This introductory chapter will introduce motivations for studying the topic, methodological concerns and principles of selection for sources. The following chapter will deal with the first question posed above: What are the practices in question? This involves defining the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm by way of a general description of the practices and their theological underpinnings with reference to several of the more widely known and commonly cited sources. The third chapter asks how the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm have shifted from within the walls of Orthodox Christian monasteries into other settings, and begins to suggest how this physical shift relates to an interpretative shift. This question is addressed by providing a general historical overview that focuses on several key events that are crucial in the shift towards a more global context. These events, which are primary factors in the shift in interpretations and the resulting disparity between them, include immigration from countries with a strong Orthodox

Christian presence into countries without such an historical presence, and the collection, publication, dissemination and translation of written materials on the topic of hesychastic prayer and the Jesus Prayer.

The purpose of the fourth chapter is threefold: to show the scope of settings in which the practices are now found, to give a general idea of what claims are being made in these settings, and to act as a first step towards a more detailed examination of contrasting claims between settings. To accomplish this, the fourth chapter will look at the wide range of groups that have adopted the practices or invoked their authority and some of the literature that has emerged from these groups. This broad survey will lay the groundwork for a more detailed study of the specific claims being made in regard to the practices. The fifth chapter will then examine specific encounters and examples of interpretative conflicts on various issues between such groups. This chapter will make extensive use of popular sources of engagement, such as internet blogs, discussion boards and online book reviews. These sources can reveal a level of intimacy and honesty not often found in traditionally published material. The contentious issues that emerge from this chapter will provide the material for the theoretical considerations found in subsequent chapters.

The next several chapters will consider issues on which interpretations of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm differ. The first issue, which is taken up in the sixth chapter, concerns the theoretical concept of authority. This chapter begins with a consideration of how theories on modes of transmission of traditions apply to the discussion of spiritual guidance. This is followed by a discussion of the notion of locality and globality and an appraisal of the relevance of the notion of subjectivization to the present topic. The second issue addressed is the role of diverging interpretations of tradition in understandings of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. This will be pursued in the seventh chapter, which will begin with a theoretical discussion of tradition that draws upon the notions of the invention of tradition, the relation of a religious canon to its various interpretations, the question of detraditionalization and, finally, the understanding of religion as a chain of memory. Following this is an examination of how the practices are seen as tools for the contemplative renewal of Christianity. The chapter will also look at the different ways hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer are seen in relation to the wider traditions of Orthodox Christianity and to forms of prayer in other religious traditions. The eighth chapter will discuss the debate over religious appropriation and the issue of therapy and religion. The last chapter will conclude with a summary of the themes discussed and will reiterate the major conclusions of the book. This chapter will also

restate the importance of this particular study to wider discussions in the field of Religious Studies.

Tradition, authority and appropriation are central themes that reappear throughout this book. There are certainly other issues that could be applied to the present topic. As I point out in several places, there is a need for future research and alternative approaches to the study of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer. Still, the three central themes I have chosen play a significant part in negotiations over the practices and are present in many sources. Here, the issue of tradition primarily refers to the relationship of single elements of a worldview to other elements of that worldview and the worldview as a whole, and the role that both of these play in the lives of practitioners and interested parties. It is my argument that tradition is more multifaceted than is typically recognized and is at work even in so-called post-traditional or detraditionalized settings, but in a different capacity. Instead of acting as a coherent whole of normative beliefs and practices, tradition is sometimes experienced as a collection of discrete elements that are optional, yet crucial in self-understanding. As seen in the accounts and discussions of chapters four and five, the theme of tradition is constantly at work, sometimes implicitly, but often explicitly.

The issue of authority is closely bound up with tradition but their relationship has not been clearly stated in many theories. Too often these concepts receive one-dimensional explanations informed by ideological commitments. Specifically, it is the authority that tradition has or does not have for an individual or group that is of present interest. Rather than judging the historical facts of groups' accounts and labelling them as inventions or authentic, various groups can be distinguished based on how they approach tradition. For example, some may draw from the hesychastic tradition for inspiration while not seeing it as truly prescriptive, while others may think of it as prescriptive and inseparably linked to a larger normative tradition. Chapters six and seven will develop a view of tradition that is informed by past models but not fully reliant on a single approach.

Additionally, the issue of appropriation and ownership of practices is another theme that often comes up in discussions on hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer. The feeling that one's religious tradition is threatened by usurpation, theft, or misuse is a clear indication of the effects of globalization on religion. This focus of the book brings the current research into conversation with the many other case studies of globalization and religion, offering an example from a setting dissimilar in many ways to those previously studied, thus contributing a unique perspective to the discussion of appropriation. Taken together, the issues of tradition, authority and

appropriation, while not the only relevant considerations, are key to understanding the roots of conflicting interpretations of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer.

The topics of the Jesus Prayer, hesychasm and prayer of the heart remain, up to the present day, virtually unexplored by the field of Religious Studies. Despite their extremely rich histories and importance in the contemporary and historical religious landscape of Orthodox Christianity and the wider world, these practices remain unexplored by Religious Studies scholars. While there have been several noteworthy historical and theological studies of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm from within academia, there is an overall lack of academic work on the subject in the field of Religious Studies in particular and there is certainly no single comprehensive text.[2] The current study is an attempt to initiate a reversal of this situation. It will not attempt to act as a comprehensive text, being limited to more modest goals, but it will hopefully act as an opening to a more widespread scholarly discussion of the subject within Religious Studies. As this area of study is ripe with potential for future research projects, I hope to stimulate interest in the topic that goes beyond the boundaries of my own research and incite others within the field to apply their own unique insights and theoretical perspectives to the study of this topic in its many aspects.

The lack of diverse scholarship on the subject is one reason for the decision to engage in a project on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm and a second reason is their widespread popularity. While they may have started as local or regional phenomena in Orthodox monasteries, the practices have since made their way across much of the globe, following closely behind the spread of Orthodox Christianity.[3] The Jesus Prayer is considered to be one of the most dominant and widespread forms of prayer in Orthodox Christianity for both clergy and laypersons (Gillet 1987: 21; Hausherr 1978: iv). As well as spreading from an Orthodox monastic setting to an Orthodox lay setting, it has reached many other Christian denominations and into other traditions and worldviews outside Christianity. A recent trip to a Barnes and Noble bookshop again confirmed this, with several volumes of the hesychastic collection called the *Philokalia* (1979) available for purchase in the Religion section. These books were among the handful of books related to Orthodox Christianity in the bookshop, and, therefore, were representatives of the religion as a whole.

This ubiquity, along with the lack of academic attention, is sufficient to warrant extensive research, but these reasons are joined by several other, more personal factors. One source of motivation for the project stems from growing up within several dioceses in the Orthodox Church in the

United States. Growing up in Russian and Greek Orthodox churches in the United States, the Jesus Prayer was vaguely familiar to me, but not until much later did I learn that there was an entire tradition of interior prayer specifically associated with this short, unassuming prayer. The rediscovery of this tradition that I had been so close to, and yet so unaware of, since childhood, added a deeper and more personal interest in and motivation for the project. When I began to read various accounts of the tradition, the tension between views of the prayer was quickly apparent.[4] This contrast, I argue, is a result of the aforementioned spread of the prayer and its practices into new settings. The dynamic tension between these accounts also helped to reinforce my interest by adding a provocative element that called for more explicit, critical analysis.

As mentioned before, the topics of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer are not unknown to academic study but several features will distinguish the present approach from the majority of past research. One basic difference in this approach is that it will examine the topic as an issue both within and without the Orthodox Church, rather than only as the quintessential Orthodox prayer. In fact, the issues that arise from the tension between interpretations of the practice by different groups will be central to the focus of the project. The practice has traditionally been associated with Orthodox Christianity since this is the context it grew out of and where it became most prominent. Because the practices have since gone beyond this setting, it seems appropriate to consider the new parameters of their use and interpretation. While existing literature sometimes touches upon the use of the practices outside of the church, the overall concern is typically to either connect the practice to other traditions and, in doing so, to claim an essential unity between this tradition and other traditions, or else to effectively distance it from other traditions and maintain its uniqueness. The present study does not attempt to support either of these claims. Instead, the general motivation of this book is to focus on several areas where perspectives on the practices differ and to attempt to understand what these differences can tell us and what brought about this situation. After an historical and theological background is used as an entrance into the topic, many of the subsequent sources will be from within the last century. This is not the time period covered by existing academic studies, which tend to focus on the early history of the Jesus Prayer and hesychastic practice. Here, the more central concern is the way the practices are presently understood and used. This emphasis on contemporary popular discussions of the topic distinguishes this book from the several other academic treatments of the topic.

Yet another divergence from past studies is in the range of sources used. In addition to using the recognized written texts on the practices, new media sources such as online book reviews, message boards, and organizational websites will all feed into the project's overall aims. For one, this will help to measure a demographically wider range of opinions on the topic, rather than relying only on recognized authorities for answers. Many of these atypical sources are often not adequately considered in other literature because the authority and position of the speaker are usually the criteria for relevance. There is also an underlying assumption that there is a single, true understanding of how to pray and understand the Jesus Prayer. Here, such an assumption cannot be maintained at the outset or else the study will end up where it starts. While the description of the practices does begin with several standard texts on the subject, the purpose of relying on these texts is to provide a starting point where one would typically begin when engaging in a study of the subject. Thus, the standard texts act as a springboard into a more thoughtful consideration of the complexities of the topic. Instead of immediately dismissing a claim as helpful or unhelpful because of its stance relative to a tradition, I hope to allow for a richer dialogue by allowing these voices a chance to speak rather than suppressing them. Looking to a wider variety of sources will also help in understanding how the practices actually function in everyday settings rather than idealizing them or reducing them to their presence in certain authorized settings.

One major limitation that has been imposed, partly out of choice and partly out of necessity, is a linguistic one. A wealth of information relevant to the current topic exists in the Greek, Russian, Romanian and Serbian languages, among others. What initially appeared to be an impediment to research was finally a useful check on the source material. The totality of this material is overwhelming in its volume. Such an abundance of material becomes unwieldy when applied to a focused research programme. Therefore, only sources that are available in English translation have been consulted, with the exception of several cited sources that have not yet been translated. This excludes a wealth of material that will, hopefully, be addressed in future studies, but the English sources alone provide sufficient material to work with.

This study has both the advantage and disadvantage of being primarily a literary approach to the topic. It is my hope that future research on related topics will explore other methods of gathering data, such as interviews and accounts of participant observation, but the abundant written material that prompted the initial interest for the project takes priority in the current

approach. While much could be gained from in-depth fieldwork, surveys and interviews on the topic, the current approach has been restricted to written texts that are available for public scrutiny, either printed or online. This is not to downplay the importance of such fieldwork for any detailed investigation that aspires to fully account for this, or any, phenomenon. Instead, the omission is due to the fact that it would require another book in order to adequately deal with these approaches and the issues they raise. There is such an abundance of unexamined written material on the subject that there was no need to look elsewhere for inspiration and insight. No doubt, there come certain hindrances from an approach limited to written sources, but some of the intimacy of fieldwork can be found in sources such as internet discussion boards and blogs. Many of these popular sources were located by online research and so web-presence has often been an important factor in the inclusion of these sources. Thus, there are inevitably relevant groups that could have provided interesting material that have not been included in this study. Again, the sources that have been consulted have been more than sufficient to provide material for a rich and varied analysis of the topic.

There exists much to be studied in relation to the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm in contemporary settings and the present approach is just one among many possible avenues of research. Many new questions, issues and avenues of research could emerge from a consideration of the themes examined in this book. This is just to emphasize that the aim of the present project is not to be exhaustive, but to offer an opening to a topic that is relatively unexplored territory in Religious Studies.

Throughout the course of this book, a number of conceptual schemes and theoretical approaches will be employed in trying to understand the changes the practices have gone through as they have entered a wider cultural environment. Each has its own value and purpose and, for the most part, they will complement each other as auxiliaries without one specific theoretical approach being primary. Therefore, there is not one methodological framework that exactly describes the present strategy of research and interpretation. The approach can be best characterized as employing a cluster of theories that revolve around the general concepts of authority, tradition, globalization and appropriation. The first concept, authority, will be explored in Chapter 6, primarily through the theories of Heelas and Woodhead on subjectivization (2005), Max Weber on the types of legitimate authority (1947), and Ong on orality and literacy in relation to authority and the transmission of traditions (2002).[5] The complex question of globalization is the common denominator throughout the

research of Roland Robertson (1992), Peter Beyer (1994), and Zygmunt Bauman (1998). These accounts deal with the global/local dynamic, or what is sometimes called *glocalization*. The theme of globalization does not have its own chapter, but is relevant throughout the discussion and will be addressed specifically during the discussion of authority in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7's discussion of the issue of tradition involves Edward Shils' sociological study of tradition (1981), Hobsbawm and Ranger's theory of the invention of tradition (1983), Michael D. Clark's work on the American discovery of tradition (2005), Jonathan Z. Smith and Tim Murphy on the hermeneutics of canons (1982, 2005), Jaroslav Pelikan's work on the recovery of tradition (1984), John B. Thompson's theory of detraditionalization (1996) and Hervieu-Léger's theory of religion as a chain of memory (2000). This chapter will also briefly discuss the concept of Orientalism in the work of J. J. Clarke (1997). The topics of appropriation and commodification will be addressed in Chapter 8, which will draw upon the work of Robert Wallis (2003), Paul C. Johnson (2003), and David Howes (1996*a*; 1996*b*). Not all of these theorists will receive full or equal attention and there will be other relevant theories that are mentioned only in passing. Now the significance of some of these sources in relation to the project as a whole will be explained.

The subjectivization thesis that is detailed in Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead's *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* describes recent changes in the religious landscape by focusing on one factor: the societal turn away from external, objective or prescribed roles and authority towards life lived in reference to one's own subjective experience. These alternatives are described as *life-as* and *subjective-life*, respectively, and the authors see the contemporary shift as being increasingly towards *subjective-life*. The authors take this idea of a subjective turn from the philosopher Charles Taylor and several others. Heelas and Woodhead see this turn as having taken place in much of Western culture generally and they maintain that, once its importance is properly recognized and taken into account, it can help to confront some of the confusions found within the contemporary academic study of religion. Their thesis will be helpful in considering the present topic as it relates to the claim of a turn towards subjective authority in the religious sphere. The role of authority in subjectivization is mentioned in *The Spiritual Revolution*, but is not explored in much depth. I hope to consider Heelas and Woodhead's understanding of these concepts and expand on them in order to account for the changes in understandings of the Jesus Prayer and hesychastic practice. This means looking deeper into the nature of authority with the help of others'

theories, such as Weber's distinction between types of legitimate authority. This typology relates the discussion of authority to the transmission of practices since the ongoing rationalization of religion is tied to the way a tradition originally based on charismatic authority becomes codified and changed into something that can be easily passed on to future generations. Walter Ong provides some helpful insights into the importance of the medium of transmission and the distinctiveness of oral and written transmission as it relates to the type of authority that is operative in a certain tradition.

Ong's work is directly relevant to the history of the spread of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer and this discussion will be tied to the role of spiritual guidance in the transmission of the practices. Following this is a consideration of theories regarding the dynamic between the global and the local. This theme, explored in the works of Roland Robertson, Peter Beyer and Zygmunt Bauman, concerns the natures of the settings where the practices originated and the settings where they have recently spread. The setting characterized as local is understood to refer to the relative uniformity of authority, while the global setting is distinguished by its plurivocal authorities. The consequences of a cultural product going from one type of setting to another is also discussed, as when a global product is adapted for local use or a local product is globalized based on its local appeal.

Many of the aforementioned questions are also closely related to the issue of tradition. The discussion of tradition will begin with a consideration of the pioneering work of Edward Shils as well as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Shils offers a solid foundation for subsequent studies of tradition with an understanding of tradition that makes room for self-reflexivity and critique as integral parts of tradition, which attempts to balance the forces of stasis and change. The issue of tradition will be further explored with the help of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. In Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition*, they use historical examples to show that some traditions presenting themselves as ancient or timeless are often very recent developments. This act of antiquating is exposed as a strategy that bestows an appearance of authenticity, and therefore authority, to the group making the claim. In the process of delineating their thesis, the authors appear to make a distinction between invented and genuine traditions. Michael D. Clark responds to Hobsbawm and Ranger in his text about the American discovery of tradition as part of its own history, despite its best efforts to avoid it. In his response, he makes a helpful distinction between tradition and heritage, with heritage being formative and tradition being normative as well as formative. Jonathan Z. Smith and Tim Murphy both discuss the

balance of preservation and innovation that is inherent in the relationship between a canon, understood generally as tradition, and its interpreter. Murphy also mentions the possibility of distinguishing novel and traditional interpretations of a canon. One of the distinctions addressed is the novelty in interpretations that attempt to recover the original purity or essence of a canon that has long been ignored or suppressed in its received interpretation. Following this, Jaroslav Pelikan's reflections on tradition help to further elucidate its nature by addressing differing views of tradition that are distinguished by the way they understand tradition in relation to its aims and how necessary tradition is once its ideals are reached.

Following this, the notion of detraditionalization will be considered. This concept refers to a process in which traditional cultural forms are replaced by forms that are identifiable as non-traditional and seen as opposed to tradition in some way. Of course, the definition of 'detraditionalization' rests on how one defines *traditional* and what is placed in opposition to it. There are several existing views on this matter that come to quite different conclusions concerning tradition, but the position to which the present study is most indebted is seen in John B. Thompson's chapter in *Detraditionalization*. This approach distinguishes between different aspects of tradition, claiming that while some aspects such as normative and legitimative functions have been significantly undermined by modernity, other aspects, for example, hermeneutic and identity-forming functions, have not.

Another important source for further developing an account of tradition is the perspective of Danièle Hervieu-Léger. As she focuses on the structuring and restructuring of religious groups based on claims of belonging to authentic traditions, in some ways her thesis is closely linked to the theories of Hobsbawm and Ranger, but it does not use the same negative language and connotations. In *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, the French sociologist creates a working definition of religion as 'an ideological, practical and symbolic system through which consciousness, both individual and collective, of belonging to a particular chain of belief is constituted, maintained, developed and controlled' (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 82). The reference to and enactment of the chain of belief, or tradition, of which this quote speaks, are key elements in Hervieu Leger's description of religiosity. Her account of tradition, memory and belief will be considered in terms of its applicability to the uses of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. These theoretical positions on tradition will collectively help to determine how to characterize the transition that has occurred as a result of the spread of the practices.

One rift that can occur between understandings on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm as they occur in different cultural settings is a disagreement on

the issue of cultural property and appropriation. For example, one group may see its ritual practices as essentially its own property or as something dangerous for others to tamper with or change. Other groups may view these same practices as part of the public domain and feel entitled to use them and share them with others. In other words, groups have different ideas about the ownership of the religious activities in which they engage. The concept of cultural appropriation will be explored in its relation to the practices of the Jesus Prayer and hesychastic prayer, using the work of theorists such as Robert Wallis and Paul C. Johnson. Theorists fall into opposing camps regarding their estimations on whether cultural appropriation is good, bad, to be avoided, or inevitable but here I will be primarily concerned with exploring how the discussion on appropriation can be applied to the present context.

Notions of commodification and appropriation inevitably bring up the complexities of globalization in relation to how cultural or religious products are transmitted and interpreted. Here, I will use Howes' work to focus on the interplay between the global and the local, a process that is known as *glocalization* or *creolization*. Glocalization implies, for one, that products distributed globally may not be received and interpreted in a way that corresponds to the original intention of the producers, which can lead to a local customizing of global products in accordance with the receiving community's worldview, or the localization of the global. Equally, there is often a movement in the other direction as local goods can become globalized and reshaped based on values that are foreign to their local existence, or the globalization of the local. Taken together, these two processes constitute the phenomenon of glocalization. Both commodity-based theories of religio-cultural appropriation and the concept of glocalization have interesting applications for the study of relocated practices, such as hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer, and they will be used to help explain some of the changes that the practices have gone through.

Since popular sources are key to the overall aim of explaining changes that the practices have gone through as they have entered popular culture, they are an essential part of this project. Understood in one way, this work is about the popularization of a practice. In addition to the limitations already mentioned, several other criteria were used in selecting the material to be used. The non-academic sources that have been included here were chosen for several reasons. One reason was to ensure the involvement of sources that illustrated the variety of interpretations of the topic. This underscored the interesting fact that a single practice can be understood in several fundamentally different ways. This also opened the discussion for

further exploration into exactly how and why some sources have different understandings. Additionally, the variety of perspectives points to the profusion of groups that seem to find the practice meaningful. This principle will be especially operative in the process of giving a general account of the various relevant groups, and then when focusing on several accounts in particular. Additionally, the principle of perspectival variety has kept the project from turning into a simple unilateral exposition of the practices.

The diversity of the sources' genres plays another determinative role in their selection. Along with popular printed literature, a variety of popular online material was used. Sources such as blogs, bulletin board posts and book reviews show that the issue is contentious within a broader segment of the population and not solely within theological or academic settings. They allow voices to be heard that do not have official group representation or that diverge from the mainstream opinion. These settings also provide a shared space where views that may not normally interact can enter into honest, often anonymous, dialogue in an environment that may feel more personal or confidential. Exchanges that might normally take place only in private are often laid open for the perusal of any casual browser or the scrutiny of any researcher. This can also be a difficulty for the researcher since anonymity can conceal a person's background; however, as each type of source has its own benefits and drawbacks, other sources will fill in and complement these online resources.

These sources are also meant to remedy the general under-representation of such sources in research. Though they are considered atypical or alternative, they are extremely popular forms of interaction today and are some of the richest sources for mining popular opinion. Since one of the issues most central to this study is the various ways in which authority is understood, by focusing only on specialist articles and books considered authoritative, the project would have neglected sources and voices not typically recognized as official that could potentially be more illustrative of the issues as they exist outside of the arena of specialists.

Another criterion used in choosing sources was the ability of a source to demonstrate the spread of the hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer. This spread involves movement into new geographic and social settings and also within the various sectors of a single group, such as the spread to the monastic, priestly and lay ranks within a single religion or denomination. Additionally, some sources were chosen based on their ability to cross boundaries and blur lines between perspectives, effectively showing the complexity of the topic by highlighting variations in understandings within a group. Often perspectives can cross traditional belief boundaries and this will be taken

into account by selecting sources that do not always follow the party line within the group they represent.

While there will be a number of disparate groups mentioned throughout the course of this project, not all groups will be allotted the same amount of space. This is a result of the ranging relevance of sources that mention the practices. Some groups only mention the Jesus Prayer or hesychasm in passing and do not go on to explore them in detail. The degree of detail or degree of engagement can be considered another principle for deciding which accounts should have the most time in the spotlight. As mentioned earlier, I will begin by looking at the wide range of groups that have some relation to the practices, but several accounts and perspectives will emerge as particularly relevant due to their degree of engagement with the practices.

Another criterion for selecting sources that will have a primary role was a source's relevance to the chosen themes of authority and tradition and issues that relate to these themes. From the initial few readings I did on the Jesus Prayer, hesychasm and prayer of the heart, the controversies, caveats and disagreements all seemed to involve a small number of themes that revolved around the nature of authority and tradition. Several contentious issues, among others, included the need for a spiritual guide, the similarity or dissimilarity of the practices to other traditions found outside of the Orthodox Church, and the role of method and technique. Reflecting on these issues led me to the conclusion that behind the diversity of issues at stake was a conflict that involved, more broadly, the themes and roles of authority and tradition. I felt that, due to the amount of tension and variety these issues inspired, this conflict was central to understanding what gives rise to arguments and divergent interpretations of the practices.

While there are unquestionably more issues to be explored, I have decided to keep these themes in the foreground and explore the role they have in the many sources that are available on the subject. Thus, if a source does not touch on these issues whatsoever, it is less likely to play a prominent role, though it may give some other information that is helpful to the project. By determining the selection of sources based on the relevance to these themes, I do not intend to determine my conclusions at the outset, but rather to establish the boundaries of the investigation based on what appear to be common issues and themes at work in many accounts of the practices.

Chapter 2

Definitions: What Are the Practices?

This chapter will be concerned with giving a general definition of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm and, while it is not a simple task to give a full definition of the practices, it is necessary to sketch a preliminary outline of what these terms refer to in order to proceed. To do this, we will repeatedly refer to several of the most well-known and standard texts on the subject.[1] Hesychasm is the name that is given to the 'body of traditional teaching – partly written, but mainly oral' that 'grew up around the Jesus Prayer' but the name also refers to a broader tradition of inner prayer (Ware 1966: 31). Making its way to the Slavic peoples from Byzantium, 'it has exercised an immense influence upon the spiritual development of the whole Orthodox world' (1966: 32). The term hesychasm is derived from the Greek *hesychia*, which means 'quiet' or 'silent' and in this context it refers specifically to a state of inner stillness in prayer and indirectly to the external silence that aids in achieving such inner silence (1993: 62). Many sources emphasize that this type of stillness is not to be understood as a passive waiting or lack of movement but 'an attitude of listening to God and of openness towards Him' (1979: 364). *Hesychia* is often used to describe a 'noniconic, non-discursive consciousness of God's presence' (1985: 399–400). This inner silence and stillness of the thoughts and passions is cultivated by what is described as a hesychastic lifestyle, which attempts to make room for God in oneself by directing one's faculties towards God and attempting to maintain a state of constant awareness and attentiveness to God's presence. It is a lifestyle that is characterized as ascetic, in the sense that it involves *ascesis*, or spiritual work, which is aimed at making one fully receptive to God's grace and making possible the full spiritual perfection of humans: *theosis*, or union with God by attaining the true likeness of God (1986*a*: 1, 25).[2] While the heights of hesychasm are usually said to be open to all who devote themselves to pure prayer of the heart, it has traditionally been associated with a monastic lifestyle. This lifestyle is premised on the idea that external silence helps to facilitate internal silence, which is, in turn, the path to pure prayer and receptivity to grace (1986*a*: 1–2).

Developing inner stillness demands that one shut out the endless stream of fleeting thoughts and sense impressions and 'listen to the voice of prayer in his own heart', which is 'not his own but that of Another' (1986*a*: 1). If one's own will and thoughts are constantly scattered and divided by mundane matters, this voice can easily be drowned out. As the inner silence that *hesychia* denotes is thought to be aided by external silence, monastic life, as a life that arduously seeks to avoid external distractions from prayer, is closely connected to hesychasm. Additionally, the writings thought of as essential to the hesychast canon are monastic writings and hesychasm is a movement originating in and inseparable from monasticism. The collection of monastic writings from the fourth to the fifteenth centuries known as the *Philokalia* is central to this canon and hesychasm is said to be 'the whole spiritual tradition represented in the *Philokalia*' (1979: 364). Though many sources repeatedly insist that *hesychia* is the ideal of every Christian and not just monks and nuns, monasticism is central to hesychasm as the lifestyle that is most complementary to the aim of inner stillness in prayer.

There are several related terms from the *Philokalia* that are part of the same ascetic tradition known as hesychasm: *proseuche* (prayer or inner attention), *nepsis* (watchfulness), *mneme theou* (memory of God) and *phylaki kardia* (guarding the heart). Generally, these terms can be said to all relate to the same process of purification of the heart. The heart is purified when attention and watchfulness prevent the disturbance of the continuous memory of God by guarding against the entrance of other thoughts. The memory of God is often accomplished with the help of the repeated use of a prayer, typically the Jesus Prayer. This is sometimes described as progressive journey from the city to the desert to the cell and, finally, into the heart. The Jesus Prayer is, then, a means to attain *hesychia*, which is the means to the Orthodox Christian's final goal of *theosis*.

Another term closely associated with hesychasm is pure prayer. Understood in this context, ideal or pure prayer is standing without any mediation 'before God, to enter into an immediate and personal relationship with him; it is to know at every level of our being [. . .] that we are in God and he is in us' (Ware 1986*a*: 1, 15). Being in this type of state of ceaseless prayer amounts to a return to humanity's original Edenic state and a rediscovery of our own likeness (*homousios*) to God, which is thought to be the continual contemplation of God and communion with Him (2). Pure prayer, which is understood as imageless and non-discursive, is seen as 'the rediscovery and "manifestation" of baptismal grace' (3). The grace that was originally received during the mystery, or sacrament, of baptism, of which one is typically unaware in day-to-day life, becomes a perpetual fact

of consciousness (2–3). This *theosis* is described as a process of becoming gods by grace and not by nature, which is said to be true only of Jesus Christ (1993: 232). The likeness of God is also distinguished from the image of God as a property that one must strive to achieve, whereas image is a property which one possesses regardless of any personal effort or development (Hausherr 1978: 225; Ware 1986*a*: 18).

Byzantine historian John Meyendorff distinguishes between four different uses of the term hesychasm. In *Byzantine Hesychasm*, he describes the first sense of the term as 'the phenomenon of Christian monastic life, based on heremitism, contemplation and "pure prayer" ' (Meyendorff 1974: iii). In its second sense, 'it is associated by modern authors with the psychosomatic methods of prayer, formally attested only in the late fourteenth century' (iii). In its third sense, the term is used to refer specifically to Palamism or 'the system of concepts developed by Gregory Palamas (d. 1359) to explain and defend the spiritual experience of his fellow-hesychasts, which is based on the distinction in God between the transcendent "essence" and the uncreated "energies" through which God becomes knowable to man in Christ' (iii). Finally, Meyendorff describes a fourth sense of 'the concept of "political hesychasm", designating a social, cultural, and political ideology, which originated in Byzantium and had a decisive impact on social and artistic development among the Southern Slavs and Russians' (iii–iv). The author sees these four types as distinguishable, yet in no way mutually exclusive (iv). While the four types are here used in relation to Meyendorff's historical approach, they can successfully introduce the several constitutive elements of the tradition: hesychasm as monastic, as technique, as theology and as broader cultural ideology. The various accounts of hesychasm that we will encounter at a later point will each stress these different elements to varying degrees, so that each may be speaking of different, if related, forms of hesychasm.

In defining hesychasm as it will be used here, the first meaning listed above is, in one sense, overly excessively narrow as it refers to contemplation and pure prayer only in a monastic setting. While monasticism provided the soil for the practice to take root, hesychasm, as we will later see, is not limited to the monastic world. On the other hand, if the term hesychasm is used to 'designate the movement – which was unified not so much by spiritual "techniques" as by a single inspiration about the possibility of experimental knowledge of God, about the centrality of sacramental life, about "deification" (*theosis*) as the ultimate destiny of man', Meyendorff says this 'would cover a rather wide variety of types' (vi). In other words, this first understanding of the term is also excessively broad and does

not provide enough precision for our definition since it could refer to an extremely wide range of ideas and practices. The second sense of hesychasm as a fourteenth-century technique of prayer also has its own limitations. While the technique of prayer involved in hesychasm will be one of the primary ways in which this practice is distinguished from other practices of prayer, the time period of its use will not be restricted to the fourteenth century but will extend to the present day.

Both of these first two meanings will be important, but, if it is made to include the use of the Jesus Prayer,[3] the second aspect will be the most instrumental in distinguishing hesychasm from other traditions and a necessary condition for the presence of hesychasm. Without the Jesus Prayer (or a similar repeated invocation of Jesus' name) or any other methods of prayer, hesychasm cannot be easily distinguished from other forms of monastic life and prayer. Neither Palamism nor hesychastic cultural ideology is sufficient to show the distinctiveness of hesychasm, though both are important parts of the phenomenon in its entirety. Palamite theology underlies many accounts of hesychasm, but it often functions as an implicit rather than an explicit element, forming part of the vocabulary used to explain hesychastic experience. Without minimizing the importance of elements identified by Meyendorff such as a general 'social, cultural, and political ideology' at work in the history of hesychasm, these aspects are not central to the present minimalist definition of hesychasm (iii). The friction between the hesychasms of social ideologies from different times or places is significant to this research, but since the hesychastic movement is said to extend beyond any particular time and place, a general definition should establish the common ground for the term and account for it as it is found in various settings, monastic as well as non-monastic, past as well as present.

Thus, the hesychasm that we will be most concerned with here is a combination of all of the understandings mentioned by Meyendorff. It could be more or less succinctly characterized as the practice of non-discursive prayer with roots in Evagrian and Palamite theology and monastic spirituality that strives to attain inner silence and deification through the use of the Jesus Prayer and other physical techniques. The physical practices that distinguish hesychastic practice from other Orthodox prayer are summarized by Bishop Kallistos Ware as: repetitive use of a short prayer (typically the Jesus Prayer), regulated breathing, specified posture and inner exploration (Ware 1986*a*: 21). Even so, as Ware points out, 'Hesychasm strictly speaking embraces all forms of inner prayer, and not just the Jesus Prayer: but in practice most Hesychast teaching is concerned with the Jesus Prayer'

(1966: 32). These four elements did not materialize together as a distinct tradition but came from pre-existing traditions that were bound together over time to become an identifiably unique practice. Now some of the particular elements of hesychastic prayer will be examined in more detail.

The *monologic* ('one-word') prayer that is most often linked to hesychasm is usually referred to as the Jesus Prayer, the Prayer of Jesus, and sometimes simply as the prayer of the heart (Ware 2000: 80). It is said to have been used without interruption in the Orthodox Church from the sixth century, at the latest, onward to the present day (Ware 1966: 32).[4] In its typical formulation, the Jesus Prayer is 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me', though this exact phrasing is not documented until after other elements of the practice were already in interaction. The first-person singular is typically used in the traditional practice of this personal supplication, but 'we' is also sometimes used in its place, and occasionally even the specific names of others are used (1986*a*: 28; 1985: 403). In practice, the standard version will sometimes be supplemented by attaching the phrase 'a sinner' to the end, or abbreviated to a shorter form such as, 'Lord Jesus' or 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me'.

Although 'Jesus Prayer', 'hesychasm' and 'prayer of the heart' are sometimes used as interchangeable, or at least inseparable, terms, they are not exactly synonymous. Instead, the Jesus Prayer is one of hesychasm's central features and a primary tool for the general end of *theosis*. The terms 'prayer of the heart' and 'hesychasm' are often used to denote the Jesus Prayer when it is used in a systematic way or at an advanced stage of the Jesus Prayer. Simply saying the Jesus Prayer casually or on occasion would not typically be considered to be prayer of the heart, which is the state of praying ceaselessly with all of one's being, even while engaged in day-to-day activities (2000: 83). The Jesus Prayer is sometimes used without the other features of hesychasm and this is often the role it takes in the lives of the Orthodox lay community. This would be the case when, for example, one uses the Jesus Prayer at points throughout the day or at specific prayer times but does not attempt to pray it ceaselessly or with material aids or as an inner prayer. Other prayers are used for the same purposes, but the Jesus Prayer holds a special position of primacy in the history of Orthodox hesychastic prayer as it 'has been found especially valuable as an aid to inner silence' (1985: 403).

The Prayer in its hesychastic context is meant to become an unceasing praise of God with all of one's being, regardless of the external situation (1986*a*: 1). The need for a spiritual guide or elder (Russian *staretz*, Greek *gerontas*) is often stressed as an important aspect of the advanced practice

of the prayer, although it is claimed that elders are much less common than they once were (4, 21). This need for spiritual guidance is generally insisted upon in an Orthodox lifestyle, but it applies especially to anyone striving to attain unceasing activity of the prayer in a systematic way using the associated psycho-physical techniques rather than the basic use of the Jesus Prayer during daily prayers, for example. Ware and many others claim that, without proper guidance, the potential for delusion is so great that one should not even approach the more technical aspects of the Jesus Prayer without it (21). With extremely thoughtful reading, the writings of Scripture and the Church Fathers on inner prayer can sometimes act as a guide themselves, but usually having a background in the faith is considered an essential precondition for practising the prayer (24).

The Jesus Prayer is only one aspect of the more all-encompassing way of life that the term *hesychasm* implies. At the same time, the Jesus Prayer is more general than hesychasm in the sense that it is practised in settings outside of a fully hesychastic life. The prayer is most often used repetitively as an aid to achieve constant prayer that is called for by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 12.3 and taken literally by those who practise hesychasm. This tradition of prayer is considered to be one of the hallmarks of Orthodox spirituality and has even been called 'the heart of Orthodoxy' (Gillet 1987: 21).

Understandings of what exactly the Jesus Prayer encompasses can be various. Some define it more generally as a prayer containing the divine name 'Jesus' that is meant to be repeated in order to achieve continual prayer (Ware 1986*a*: 7). Lev Gillet defines the Jesus Prayer as 'a technical term of Byzantine spirituality which designates the invocation of the name Jesus, whether alone or inserted into a more or less extended formula' (Gillet 1987: 21). This would allow the term 'Jesus Prayer' to apply to a number of variations that do not closely resemble the common form. Others argue that this is too loose of a definition and insist that the Jesus Prayer is distinct from these other variations and is primarily a tool for reaching continual prayer, arising from a more basic spontaneous expression of *penthos* (Hausherr 1978). From this perspective, the Jesus Prayer is not simply the name of Jesus in a short prayer or a request for mercy to God. As Hausherr argues, 'the essence of the Jesus Prayer requires a request for mercy together with a name or title of the Saviour that implies an act of faith in him as Messiah, as Son of God, as God himself' (267). The position that one takes on this question inevitably affects one's historical account of the Prayer since a more general definition of the Jesus Prayer would allow its origins to be traced to formulas which pre-date the common form.

For example, Hausherr states, 'the antiquity of the emerging formula is not determined by referring to its antecedents or by claiming that it pre-existed in another shape in the earlier formulas' (266).

The Jesus Prayer can be seen to have four major elements: the invocation of the name of Jesus, the appeal for mercy with sorrow for sin, the discipline of frequent or continual repetition of prayers and the attempt to reach a state of non-discursive prayer (Ware 1985: 403–4). It is sometimes claimed that the invocation of the divine name is the most expedient or effective means to the state of *theosis* (Ware 1986*a*: 10). It is also sometimes emphasized that there are other ways besides the 'way of the name' to reach this goal of Orthodox life (3, 4). Ware cites the prayer's special effectiveness as a product of its simplicity, flexibility, completeness, the power of the divine name and the spiritual discipline of persistent repetition (4, 15). This simplicity allows anyone to devote themselves to it (3, 15). One who is not theologically inclined can still pray this prayer with complete devotion because of its simple content and short length. The flexibility of the prayer allows it to be at least partly personalized based on particular circumstances and individual needs. As Ware says, 'the Way of the Name has a wideness, a generosity, not to be confined within rigid and unvarying rules' (28). Again, this description depends on one's definition of the prayer and according to the definition of Hausherr, the way of the name is not necessarily equivalent with the Jesus Prayer (Hausherr 1978).

The Prayer is said to be applicable to many situations and many lifestyles: monks, nuns, clergy and single or married laypeople in their various professions. It is sometimes said to encapsulate the whole of the Gospels and sum up the role of Jesus in the world. The spiritual discipline of persistent repetition is said to be based on the mind's need to focus on something and its ability to better focus on short and direct statements, criteria which this prayer fulfils (Ware 1986*a*: 12–14). The divine name 'Jesus' itself is also seen as having a transformative power that gives the Jesus Prayer an advantage over other prayers that do not include the name (10). The idea that there is a power inherent in names, especially the divine name, is understood in terms of the Hebraic theology of the name (10–11; Gillet 1987: 24–5). In defining the Jesus Prayer and distinguishing it from other similar prayers, the presence of the divine name is said to be an essential and constant factor (Ware 1966: 27). Though clear references to the Jesus Prayer do not occur until around the sixth century, the content of the prayer is described as scriptural based on the reverence to the divine name in both Christian and Jewish scriptures (30). Though the included name is said to give the prayer an advantage over other prayers, there is usually a

delicate balancing act between attributing efficacy and pre-eminence of the prayer to the words it contains, or the thought and feelings behind them. As Theophan the Recluse (d. 1894) claims, 'the power is not in the words but in the thoughts and feelings [. . .] The Jesus Prayer is like any other prayer. It is stronger than all other prayers only in virtue of the all-powerful Name of Jesus, Our Lord and Saviour' (Ware 1966: 62, 99).

The prayer is said to have two poles – one reverential and one penitential. The first pole involves a recognition of the transcendence of God and the role that he fulfils, while the second is an admittance of one's own imperfection and inability to be saved without God's help. The awareness of both of these facts is aimed at leading to an experience of extreme humility in the face of the chasm between divine and human nature, yet the redemptive power of Christ and a sense of the numinous is also inferred. Hausherr says that the combination of adoration and compunction 'signify everything that is divine and everything that is human, at the point where human and divine are most separate in the order of being and most united in the order of love' (Hausherr 1978: 325). Ware describes this duality of adoration and compunction as the 'two essential "moments" of Christian devotion' (Ware 1966: 32). While the prayer is supplicatory in nature, the supplication is not rational or verbal, but comes from the silence deep within onself, where language is no longer necessary or useful and where one is closest to God (1986*a*: 15). The most direct encounter with God is only possible when all thoughts and words are laid aside (1985: 395).

As mentioned before, the original use of the Jesus Prayer and hesychastic practice emerged from Orthodox monasticism. The external silence that is demanded by this lifestyle is seen as an ideal situation in which to turn inward with prayer. This is due to the difficulty of so-called pure prayer and constant remembrance of God that was brought about by the Biblical fall. As a result of this fall, humans became fragmented in a fundamental way with far-reaching effects that touch every aspect of existence. The original natural harmony of intellect, desires and emotions was thrown out of balance and thereafter these powers of the soul did not perform the functions they were naturally created for: the constant contemplation, desire and praise of God. Instead, each became enchanted by the created world and humanity turned its attention to this created diversity rather than to the creator who was responsible for this diversity, effectively cutting the person off from their divine source. Rather than trying to wilfully block and struggle with the relentless stream of thoughts and desires, which is said to be attainable only by those who are advanced in prayer, the Jesus Prayer acts as a point of focus in order to bring together all of one's faculties

(Ware 1986*a*: 13–14). Even the actual saying of the prayer should not be thought about while praying, but rather Jesus should be the sole object of attention (4). This internal disintegration is not a fact that most people are clearly aware of, but it becomes apparent as one begins to be transformed during *metanoia*, or change of mind, which is a perceptual shift in which grace is perceived directly rather than experienced unconsciously (3). Turning all of one's thoughts to Jesus by repeatedly invoking his name is meant to effectively overcome this scatteredness and bring not only interior union, but union with Christ and all creation in *theosis* (15). This union does not operate in binary, as either full separation or full union, or progress in a steady, predictable way. The path towards *theosis* is a spectrum on which the end of full *theosis* is completely realized only after death (18).

Several different stages are found in much of the literature on hesychastic prayer: oral prayer, mental or noetic prayer and prayer of the heart or prayer of the mind in the heart. This progress is described as a journey down into the heart where the prayer reaches deeper and deeper levels of the self. Oral prayer is when one is attentively saying the prayer aloud. Mental or *noetic* prayer is when the prayer is active in one's mind or *nous* while not necessarily being outwardly uttered. The last stage is not simply an affective prayer but a prayer that emerges from one's spiritual centre, or heart, and, in turn, causes the totality of a person – intellect, emotions, passions, the subconscious – to be enveloped in prayer (Ware 1986*a*: 17). Ware describes the Patristic understanding of the heart well:

> The heart in this context is to be understood in the Semitic and biblical rather than modern Western sense [. . .] it is our innermost being [. . .] the centre not only of consciousness but of the unconscious, not only of the soul but of the spirit, not only of the spirit but of the body, not only of the comprehensible but of the incomprehensible; in one word, it is the absolute centre. (17, 20)

To attain pure prayer, one must 'descend from the intellect into the heart [. . .] not from but *with* the intellect' (18). As the spiritual centre of a person and the location of the true self, the heart is the meeting point between human and divine where humans are said to be most truly made in the image of God. Its unfathomable depths contain all that is most good and most evil in a person, making it dangerous territory for exploration (18). The ultimate aim is to achieve this type of prayer not only on specific occasions but to turn one's life into a continual prayer of the heart.

These stages of prayer are thought of as more or less sequential steps in a development, but are not mutually exclusive. The same spectrum that exists for the general path towards *theosis* applies to stages of prayer aimed at this goal as well. In other words, merely experiencing a high level of prayer does not make one immune from falling back into the lower stages. When one's mind becomes exhausted and too distracted to continue, the oral prayer can act as a support to fall back on. This applies, to different degrees, to those who are advanced in prayer as well as beginners: 'There will be times when even the most "advanced" in inner prayer will wish to call upon the Lord Jesus aloud' (17). While some warn of saying the prayer without much thought, the repetition is seen as an aid to meaningful continual prayer. One effect of the prayer of the heart is meant to be the reunion of mind and the heart, where the mind returns from a long absence and is again focused upon the centre of one's being where human and divine are joined. This prayer of the heart is also considered to be spontaneous and self-acting. Contrasted with self-acting prayer is strenuous prayer – contrasting '"my" prayer to the prayer of *Christ in me*' (3, 18). As one advances in this prayer, the one who is praying becomes silent and the prayer says itself as the self-active prayer of the Holy Spirit within oneself (1). Letting the prayer speak without effort is actually letting God speak (2). Prayer of the heart is at the intersection of human and divine willpower, bringing one's own action and prayer in line with the divine will and action and thus uniting the two (18–19).

The Jesus Prayer is practised as both a free prayer and a fixed prayer (Ware 1986*a*: 5–7). Practised freely, the prayer is to be prayed throughout the day at any available moments and especially in moments of anxiety or inner turmoil. As a fixed practice, the prayer is integrated into one's daily prayer schedule and set aside to certain times in the day and commonly prayed for a specific amount of time or number of repetitions. This is the setting in which prayer aids and specific instructions are usually to be considered most applicable. According to Ware, one can use the prayer freely without ever making this kind of formal use of it (6).

In general, the Jesus Prayer and hesychastic prayer are considered part of one's private prayer life. This is seen in both the free and fixed use of the prayer. Additionally, there are certain settings where the Jesus Prayer takes on a communal character, being recited aloud by either one participant while the others pray silently, or by an entire group of participants praying aloud simultaneously or taking turns. Since its goal is continual prayer, the Jesus Prayer is used communally in monasteries both within established services and outside of these times, such as while

preparing food. Some Orthodox lay communities also make use of the Prayer communally.

Often there is an insistence on flexibility in the exact wording of the prayer and on the efficacy and necessity of the divine name. Ware claims that 'the one essential and unvarying element is the inclusion of the divine Name "Jesus"' (Ware 1986*a*: 5, 11). In most accounts, the justification for this claim is traced to Biblical passages and Hebrew beliefs about the power of the divine name.[5] In this understanding there is a connection between a soul and the name that designates it in which a thing's energy and peculiarities are contained in its name and a certain amount of control over it is possible by the use of its name (10). As with all names, the name of God was an invocation of the subject it referred to and brought God present to bear on the situation at hand: 'Attentively and deliberately to invoke God's name is to place oneself in his presence, to open oneself to his energy' (10). Thus the attributes and powers of God were actually summoned when the holy name was uttered. While there were other monologic prayers in early Christianity, the introduction of the power of the divine name as the core of the prayer is seen as an important development within the tradition.

Emphasizing the relative flexibility of the formula reinforces the idea that 'there are no fixed and unvarying rules . . . there is no mechanical technique . . . which can compel God to manifest his presence. His grace is conferred always as a free gift' (3–4). Hausherr agrees with Ware's assessment, emphasizing the need to keep the prayer from being overly formulaic and mentioning the historical and personal circumstances that he believes should be factors in prayer (1978: 325). At many times in each of their studies, Hausherr and Gillet lament the uniformity used in the Jesus Prayer and, like Ware, argue for a more personal adaptation (Hausherr 1978: 205; Gillet 1987: 53). While it is claimed that typically many years, or a lifetime, are required to achieve prayer of the heart, there are exceptions which would help support the idea that it is ultimately not a strictly formulaic and generic progression, but a unique path for each who embark on it and ultimately out of our control (Ware 1986*a*: 19). Certain people are said to have had the natural predisposition and calling for this type of prayer and reach the state of self-acting pure prayer relatively quickly (19). As mentioned, the invocation of the name itself is also often considered only one possible path on the journey inward (3). Sometimes this is linked to the particular vocation, personality type, or external circumstances of the one praying. In other words, the Jesus Prayer may not be the best means of reaching *theosis* for everyone.

Although the name itself is said to bring a special power to the prayer, the power of the divine name is usually distinguished from what is called merely magical thinking and it is maintained that the Jesus Prayer is distinct from the superficially analogous practices of using a talisman or mantra (Ware 1986*a*: 11; Hausherr 1978: 326; Gillet 1987: 25). This is usually defended by pointing out the Christian context and content of the Jesus Prayer. The concept of synergy, or the necessary, though unequal, cooperation of both the human and divine will for salvation, is seen to be a distinguishing characteristic of the prayer: 'The Name is power, but a purely mechanical repetition will by itself achieve nothing [. . .]. As in all sacramental operations, the human person is required to co-operate with God through active faith and ascetic effort' (Ware 1986*a*: 11). Contrasted with the way that the use of mantra is portrayed in many Orthodox sources, this means that with the Jesus Prayer, human effort alone is not sufficient: 'It is not something that I initiate but something in which I share; it is not primarily something that *I* do but something that *God* is doing in me' (2). Even so, there remains the necessity of a deliberate effort of the human will to fulfil the aims of the prayer (17). This emphasis on the balance of Divine-human synergy is at the core of many Orthodox descriptions of the use of the Jesus Prayer.

The Orthodox prayer rope (Russian *komvoschini*, Greek *chotki*) is one aid that is meant to lead to perpetuity in prayer. Like in other traditions, the prayer rope as it is used here helps one keep track of the quantity of prayers, with ropes having anywhere from 33 to 500 knots or beads. These ropes are distinguished from the secular worry beads often used in Greece without any religious intention, though the two probably have a common source. There is often a tassel that dangles from the rope and this is said to be used for wiping away the tears that are considered vital signs of progress in the prayer by expressing *metanoia*. Typically, one's spiritual father will assign a certain number of prayers, which will be counted by the prayer rope, but often keeping track of the quantity of prayers is thought of as secondary to keeping attention on the prayer (Ware 1986*a*: 7). Indeed, it is also seen as simply a task related to the prayer to act as an outlet for the body and a way for the body to be involved in the prayer (7). This is also true of making the sign of the cross and the prostrations that can accompany the prayer. Using these material aids enables one's body to participate in the prayer. Also, between sets of prayers, a different prayer is sometimes said to the *Theotokos*, or 'mother of God'.

While a change in breathing is not always emphasized in saying the Jesus Prayer, it is a general rule that some form of slow and slightly restricted

breathing is recommended, if for no other reason than to say the prayer with full attention and avoid rushing through it. Sometimes writings suggest that the prayer be linked with the breath by synchronizing the two. Either the first half of the Jesus Prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God', is to be said on inhaling and the rest, 'have mercy on me (a sinner)', on exhaling, or the entire prayer is to be said with each breath. While the repetition of the prayer in some cases is recommended as slow and focused, for example one hundred times in an hour in Russian sources such as Fr. Ignatii Brianchaninov, other recommendations in the Greek tradition include recitation at a much faster pace, with briskness rather than deliberation being the aid for attention (22). Several sources, such as *The Way of a Pilgrim* mention synchronizing the heart beat to the prayer as well (8). According to Ware, the words of the prayer will usually spontaneously conform to the body's rhythms in a natural and unforced way (22). The aim of this is to bring the prayer from the mind into the heart with the breath and letting it stay there to work on the heart for a few seconds before exhaling (21). Eventually, the heart will begin to pray automatically, but only by the grace of God. Whereas there is much effort involved in the first two stages of prayer, prayer of the heart is said to be strictly a matter of grace. Thus, while there is a certain amount of technique that can be involved, it is usually emphasized that prayer of the heart is not truly an automatic and predictable process that is simply a matter of due course, but it is a gift of grace which is bestowed on God's own terms and in God's own time (3–4). This would explain why some who work a lifetime to achieve it never do, while others achieve it with little effort. Still, the rule of thumb indicates that it takes a great deal of time and effort to reach the heights of prayer. This, again, is representative of the Orthodox insistence on synergy, or the dual cooperation of human and divine wills, both being necessary for salvation with the divine will being the infinitely more important factor.

The exact description of an advisable posture is not found in every prescriptive text of the prayer, but it is commonly taught that sitting is ideal, whereas most Orthodox prayers are performed standing. Some sources stress that one is to sit in a low stool with legs straight and head bowed until the chin is on the breast, looking towards the heart at the core of one's body, while others recommend sitting like Elijah on Mount Carmel with head bowed between legs (21). These recommendations led to hesychasm's theological opponents to caricature hesychasts with the derogatory epithet *omphalopsychoi* ('ones with their souls in their navels') or navel-gazers. Ware states that 'no particular posture is essential [. . .] the Prayer is most usually recited when seated, but it may also be said standing or

kneeling – and even, in cases of bodily weakness and physical exhaustion, when lying down' (6). The prayer, when said alone, is often done in darkness and silence. As darkness can often have a soporific effect, occasional prostrations are also suggested (7). Despite these specifics, one's personal disposition is said to give the prayer a personalized quality. In addition to the aids recommended based on the experiences of others, what is usually emphasized is that the prayer should be as attentive as possible and whatever aids in this is seen as acceptable. Generally speaking, the body and physical techniques are seen as potential aids in prayer as the body 'is endowed with energies that can be harnessed for the work of prayer', aiding in concentration and allowing the body to participate in prayer as part of the human totality (20–1). This perspective affirms a recognition in hesychasm that 'physical and psychical conditions affect each other' (21).

The monastic tradition of Orthodox Christianity, like others, has attempted to counter the prevalent idea that monasticism is a withdrawal from substantial social issues of the real world and into a life that is safe from real-life dangers and only concerned with self-serving interests. Unlike some other monastic rules, the Orthodox monastic lifestyle does not typically require social activism or humanitarian relief in the sense of direct and consolidated efforts at material social aid. This makes answering doubters even more difficult because the appeal is to different criteria altogether where spiritual suffering is the root of all other forms of suffering. It is insisted that life spent focused on the invocation of Jesus is 'world affirming rather than world-denying' (Ware 1986*a*: 26). Instead of social action, prayer is seen as the best service that those living a monastic life can provide. In order truly to become monks, persons must disengage with the world and its constant whirlwind of concerns on one hand, but also be acutely aware of suffering in the world and suffer on its behalf in constant prayer for everyone and everything in it. If they became caught up in worldly concerns, including worthwhile social causes, the intensity and purity of their prayer for the world might be compromised. This may, however, only apply to a certain level of spiritual development as some monks are thought to be able to remain in this state of pure prayer continually while being simultaneously engaged in the world. Indeed, the father of monasticism, Anthony of Egypt (d. 356), and many other paradigmatic monks returned to the world after prolonged eremitic periods to share what they had learned in their trials. Thus the life of a hesychastic monk is seen as a specific calling which is only for some, and which may require that some tasks, such as social activism, be left up to those who have other callings.

One argument against the supposed isolation from the real problems of humanity is that the monastic lifestyle, rather than simply addressing the surface of the problem or the effects of fallenness, is a direct encounter with the internal root of all human problems in fallen nature. The heart is seen as the place where evil emerges and also where the human and divine meet, and therefore it is necessary to return to this source in order to truly confront our problems and almost infinite potential for development. The hesychast's life is a withdrawal into the spiritual desert of the heart, and often a physically deserted location, where demons abound and where God is to be found (18; Clark 1976: 150). In ordinary existence, the multitudes of distractions of everyday living can keep one from seeing to the depths of the true internal issues, so a solitary life is much more effective to deal with these issues. The silence that is sought in this external and internal solitude is also seen to be 'of all things the hardest and most decisive in the art of prayer' (Ware 1986*a*: 1). In short, monastic life is claimed to be much more challenging and dangerous than critics admit since it involves facing the ugliest aspects of ourselves and perpetually struggling with them, rather than ignoring or postponing this inner warfare.

Additionally, monastic life is seen as one of the most selfless acts of all. It consists of living a materially meagre life of constant spiritual battle in order to reach a state of pure prayer for the entire world, not just for one's own soul. This kind of prayer is considered vital for the world: 'That is what the world needs above all else: not people who *say* prayers with greater or less regularity, but people who *are* prayers' (16). As prayer is understood as a supremely effectual act, it follows that, from this perspective, constant and pure prayer for the entire world would be regarded as fruitful and anything but selfish. Additionally, 'the Jesus Prayer helps us see Christ in each one, and each one in Christ' and transforms the universe for the one who is praying, thereby affecting that person's way of relating to the rest of the world (27). Seraphim of Sarov (d. 1833), probably the most well-known modern Russian Orthodox saint, proclaimed: 'Acquire inner peace and thousands around you will find their salvation' (27). With Seraphim, Ware claims that

> [F]ar from turning our backs on others [in private prayer] we are in fact affirming our commitment to our neighbour and our sense of the value of everyone and everything in God [. . .] making each more efficient in his actions, not cutting him off from others but linking him to them (27–9).

While many insist that Orthodox asceticism does not strive for mortification of the passions but the transformation and redirection to their original and natural direction towards God, there are certain dangers and pains that are often said to be part of the process. The posture that many texts suggest is admittedly uncomfortable and even painful, but this should not dissuade the aspirant from continuing in the practice (Ware 1986*a*: 11–12). Without proper guidance, the 'misuse of the physical technique can damage someone's health and disturb his mental equilibrium; hence the importance of a reliable master' (22).

This is true for both tampering with heartbeat and breathing and with inner exploration that does not centre on the heart but below it at 'the source of the carnal thoughts and sensations which pollute the mind and heart' (22). In this respect, the psychological dangers that lie on the hesychastic path are sometimes emphasized. The imagination (Greek *phantasia*) can produce visions that one mistakenly takes as visions of the divine light and assumes to be indications that one has already reached pure prayer (14, 19). Hesychastic prayer is seen 'not so much as prayer emptied of thoughts, but as prayer filled with the Beloved . . . a prayer of *affection* – although not of self-induced emotional excitement' (15–16). Thus, emotions also can endanger one's progress. The term that encompasses all of these non-physical dangers is *prelest* in Russian or *plani* in Greek, loosely translated 'spiritual illusion', and it plays a large part in the struggles towards prayer of the heart (14). Just as the desert is seen as a dangerous and spiritually powerful place, so is the desert of the heart. Thus hesychasm which is called the art of arts and science of sciences and makes entry into the heart and the heart's purification its primary task, is a journey fraught with all of the dangers of *prelest*, but also the infinite potential of *theosis*. Having discussed the general characteristics of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, we will now go on to consider how these traditions were formed and how they were spread from their original settings into a more global environment.

Chapter 3

History: How Have the Practices Spread?

This chapter will examine how the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm ended up in the diverse settings in which they are now found, or, in other words, how these practices spread from their original settings in monasteries into the wider world. The factors contributing to this spread that will be considered fall under many headings, including literary, political and theological. A general historical overview of the practices will help to highlight these factors, which will play a role in theoretical discussions in later chapters.

We have already seen how several elements of the Jesus Prayer can be distinguished: the invocation of the name of Jesus, the appeal for mercy with sorrow for sin, the discipline of frequent or continual repetition of prayers and the attempt to reach a state of non-discursive prayer (Ware 1986*b*: 176; 1985: 403–4). While evidence suggests that these elements only coalesced into the recognizable practice of the Jesus Prayer in the fourteenth century, each of these elements can be found to exist on its own in much earlier texts. A comprehensive history of the hesychast tradition would be very difficult since many of 'those who have enshrined it have renounced the world in order to better serve it and have already disappeared from the stage of history' (Sherrard 1990: 419). Still, there are a number of important events that have determined the historical course of this tradition. We will now see how aspects of the practices emerged and eventually merged to form the practice later known as the Jesus Prayer.

In fourth-century Egypt, a group of anchoritic and coenobitic monks known as the Desert Fathers wrote about maintaining the continual remembrance of God by using the discipline of frequent repetition of short prayers. The ideal of continual prayer in Christianity can be traced back at least to this period (Ware 2000: 75). After the end of the Diocletian persecutions in the second century CE and the subsequent legalization of Christianity by Constantine I (d. 337), some Christians fled to the Egyptian desert to engage in monasticism, or what came to be called white martyrdom.

This can be seen as a reaction to the perceived laxity in Christian life that followed the end of the major persecutions. Their writings are collected into the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, or *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, which were typically aphorisms and accounts of conversations between *abbas*, or elders, and their disciples on spiritual life. Though the writings were collected in the fifth or sixth century (Harmless 2004), they derive from earlier Coptic sources and it is most probable that, when originally written down, they were primarily intended for a localized monastic audience. Like most monastic texts, there is much that is left unsaid about the monastic context in which they were written since the texts were written in a small local context and this background knowledge was assumed.

The repetitive prayers of the Desert Fathers usually took the form of a memorized selection from Christian scripture, often a Psalm (Ware 1985: 404). The brevity of these prayers allowed the monks to engage in their day-to-day activities while keeping God constantly in mind and therefore present throughout the day (404). Some of these phrases, such as Psalm 69 and Psalm 50, are related to appeals for mercy and expression of sorrow for sins, or *penthos*, which is the second element of the Jesus Prayer, but there does not seem to be a special preoccupation with the name of God in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (404). Likewise, there is no real emphasis on apophatic or imageless prayer. Although their writings mention many of the most central aspects of the Jesus Prayer, such as interior stillness, compunction and fleeing one's obsessive thoughts, the Desert Fathers do not describe a practice that can be clearly recognized as the Jesus Prayer as it is known today.

The element of imageless prayer was introduced in the fourth century by Evagrius of Pontus (d. 399), another Egyptian monk who was taught by the Desert Father Macarius the Great (d. 391). Evagrius wrote extensively on pure prayer and drew many of his ideas from Neo-Platonism and the so-called Cappadocian Fathers: Basil the Great (d. 379), Gregory Nazianzan (d. c. 390) and Gregory of Nyssa (d. c. 394) (Ware 1985: 405). Unlike some of his Egyptian contemporaries, Evagrius promoted the notion of apophatic, or non-discursive, and imageless prayer, stressing that God transcends the human intellect and can only be approached through pure prayer, in which the mind or *nous* is naked, or free of thoughts and passions. He inherited this apophatic approach primarily from the Cappadocian Fathers, and especially Gregory of Nyssa (Ware 1985: 405). The Cappadocian Fathers, in turn, were themselves elaborating on the third-century works of Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 215) and Origen of Alexandria (d. c. 254) (Ware 1993: 62–3). This apophatic way of negation

in terms of intellectual thought was also a way of union and understood as a springboard into the mystical experience of God, an idea that was taken up by many later Orthodox authors such as Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 500–600) and Maximos the Confessor (d. 662) (Ware 1993: 63–4). Apophaticism later became an important element in the development of the Jesus Prayer as the fourth element mentioned above. While Evagrius at one point advocates the use of 'an intense but brief prayer', Ware notes that Evagrius neither explicitly ties this element to pure prayer, nor gives a method for reaching this highest state of prayer (1985: 405). While Evagrius was taught by several of the Desert Fathers, such as Macarius the Great, his writings are a departure from their style and approach to prayer and the spiritual life. Compared to the aphorisms and stories in the *Apophthegmata*, his writings are much less oral in nature and are obviously intended as more general theological works rather than individual advice for monks.

We have now seen the emergence of three of the four elements of the Jesus Prayer: short, repetitive prayers, compunction, and imageless, interior prayer. Only in the fifth century does a strain of devotional practice emerge from Asia Minor and Northern Greece that is distinctively oriented towards the name of Jesus (1985: 405). Writing in the fifth century, Nilus of Ancyra (d. c. 430) in present-day Turkey mentions the continual remembrance or invocation of the name of Jesus several times, but his presentation is nowhere as systematic as that of Diadochus of Photiki (d. c. 486), who wrote a generation afterwards (Ware 1986*b*: 177–8). It is in the works of Diadochus that Ware sees evidence for the 'move towards greater uniformity' in the specific formulation of the prayer used (1985: 405). A focus on the name of Jesus was central to Diadochus' teachings, which clearly connected the use of the name to non-discursive prayer and a discipline of repetition, but not specifically to a sense of *penthos*, or compunction (405). Diadochus recommends the repetition of the name 'Lord Jesus' to unify one's fragmented attention and strip the intellect bare, leading to a state of pure prayer (405). When the outlets of the mind are blocked in non-discursive, imageless prayer, the mind is said to need an outlet for activity, and the name of Jesus is given as a remedy for this mental restlessness (405). Diadochus says that through determined effort, the invocation will grow to be more spontaneous and effortless, as if it had a will of its own, and will act as a guard over the mind and heart, repelling all that is foreign to our human nature in its original perfection (405–6). Thus, Diadochus provides a specific method for reaching the apophatic prayer that was first described in detail by Evagrius. While it remains uncertain if Diadochus was simplifying a longer formula when he speaks of continually invoking

'Lord Jesus', he certainly plays an important role in the history and development of the Jesus Prayer by introducing the use of the name 'Jesus' as central to a repetitive prayer of repentance aimed at purifying the mind (406).

While there is some disagreement regarding which of these elements came first,[1] the first known verbal formulations that closely resemble the now standard version of the Jesus Prayer come from the sixth and seventh centuries. Barsanuphius (d. 563) and John (d. 543), the 'old men of Gaza', wrote many personal letters of spiritual advice to laypeople recommending the repetitive use of the phrases such as 'Jesus, help me'. Their disciple Dorotheus (d. c. 560) speaks of using the prayer 'Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me' (406). In the *Life of Abba Philemon*, based on the life of the Egyptian monk from the sixth or early seventh century, the phrase 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me' first appears (406).

In the following several centuries, several Orthodox monks wrote notable works on the Jesus Prayer, such as John Climacus, or John of the Ladder (d. 606), Hesychius of Jerusalem and Philotheus of Sinai (c. 800–1000). These authors speak of the Jesus Prayer as a tool for unifying inner attention, stripping the mind of mental images and eventually reaching a state of *hesychia* (406). Although none of these authors from the so-called Sinaite school mentions a specific formula for the Jesus Prayer, given the abundance of allusions in their writings, Ware believes they were transmitting an existing tradition rather than creating a new one (406).

The prayer becomes even more prominent and descriptively detailed in the works of Gregory of Sinai (d. 1346) who, in the early fourteenth century, travelled to Mount Athos in Northern Greece to seek guidance in the practice of *hesychia*, the guarding of the intellect, contemplation and the Jesus Prayer (407).[2] While he was said to be somewhat disappointed by the lack of monks he found dedicated to these practices on Mount Athos, Gregory's writings were to become important contributions in the growth in general knowledge about the Jesus Prayer in the fourteenth century (407). Additionally, his disciples settled in Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia and propagated hesychastic teachings in these areas (Ware 1986*c*: 247). In this way, Gregory of Sinai functioned as a link between the Coptic and Greek worlds in his move from Sinai to Athos and also, as a link between the Greek and Slavic worlds through his disciples (247). This role was taken up by other monks in the following centuries and continued to play an important part in the spread of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. However, Ware does point out that the Jesus Prayer cannot be found in all early Orthodox writings. It is not explicit in the writings of some of the most influential

Orthodox theologians of this period, such as Pseudo-Dionysius, Isaac of Syria (d. c. 700), Maximos the Confessor and Symeon the New Theologian (1022) (Ware 1985: 407).

The fourteenth century is one of the most important periods in the development of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer. Not only were the practices forced into the wider public's view by critics who made accusations of heresy against the monks who performed them, but a theological *apologia* of hesychasm was also formulated in defence against these accusations. This official theological explanation helped ground the prayer in a doctrinal formulation and consequent authority that continues to exist in the Orthodox Church. By grappling with the question of how to relate apophatic theology to the experience of God, hesychasts in the fourteenth century brought together both Evagrian and Pseudo-Macarian terminologies and formulated a mystical doctrine which attempted to address both of these issues (Ware 1993: 64). The key figure in this debate was the Athonite monk Gregory Palamas (d. 1359), who wrote in support of the monks of Mount Athos using physical aids in their prayer, such as controlled breathing, posture, prayer ropes and the continually-prayed Jesus Prayer, and also supported their claims of directly experiencing God as light. Ware states that 'it was Gregory's achievement to set Hesychasm on a firm dogmatic basis by integrating it into Orthodox theology as a whole' (67).

Palamas accomplished this in his response to Barlaam of Calabria's (d. 1348) three criticisms of hesychastic prayer: that hesychastic methods of prayer were grossly overly-physical, that experience of God during earthly life could only be indirect and that the light perceived by hesychasts could not be an uncreated light (Ware 1986*c*: 250). Palamas responded to the first by claiming that the hesychastic methods of prayer were actually based on the biblical notion that the entire human is made in the image of God, rather than just the human intellect. Therefore, he argued, it must also be appropriate for the body and the mind to both be involved in prayer. To answer the next two criticisms, Palamas brought up the distinction first formulated by Philo (d. 50) and the Cappadocian Fathers between God's essence and God's energies (*ousia/energia*) (Louth 1981: 91). Using this distinction, Palamas claimed that while God's essence is completely unknowable and imperceptible, God's energies are perceivable as his mode of direct action and interaction with creation (Ware 1993: 68). This distinction allowed the possibility of experiencing God's divine uncreated energies in the form of light, while retaining a fully transcendent divine essence that is ultimately beyond human experience (68–9). The final aim of hesychastic prayer, or *theosis* (deification), is also viewed in accordance with

the essence/energy distinction; it is union with God's energies but not God's essence (232).

Ware states that 'for the Hesychasts of Byzantium, the culmination of mystical experience was the vision of the Divine and Uncreated Light' and this light perceived by the hesychasts was thought to be the same light that the Apostles Peter, James and John witnessed during Christ's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Ware 1993: 66; 1986*a*: 25–6). This light is seen with the physical eyes but can only be perceived by eyes that have already been transformed and deified through purification and illumination (1993: 69). Therefore, a true vision of this divine light is indicative that one has undergone *theosis* to a significant degree (1986: 25). This light is regarded as one of the divine energies, which are considered uncreated, fully divine and eternal. The thorny theological issues surrounding this controversy were finally officially settled when the essence/energy distinction became a part of official Orthodox doctrine in 1351 at a local Church council in Constantinople, and then again upheld ten years later at another local council in Constantinople (1993: 67). Though not recognized as ecumenical by most Western Christians, these councils were widely accepted as authoritative by the Orthodox population of Byzantium (67). Through these councils and controversies, hesychastic methods and the experience of God as the vision of the divine uncreated light were confirmed as key elements in Orthodox theology, where they have remained to the present day. If it were not for the debates in the fourteenth century that gave the practices a 'firm dogmatic basis', hesychasm might not have achieved the same degree of widespread and lasting acceptance within the Orthodox Church (67).

Following the culmination of hesychast victory in these councils, the tradition on Mount Athos slowly declined until the eighteenth century, due partly to the political situation on the Ottoman occupation of Greece. Between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, Palamite-inspired hesychasm spread to areas north of Greece such as Moldavia, Serbia and Russia. Anthony of Kiev (d. 1073), known as the father of Russian monasticism, brought Athonite traditions to the monastery he founded in Kiev in the mid-eleventh century (Bolshakoff 1977: xx–xxi). Sergius of Radonezh (d. 1392) revived monasticism in Russia in the fourteenth century after several centuries of lapse due to the break in communication with Byzantium and the destruction of monasteries due to the Mongol Invasions (xxi). Both Russian and Greek monks brought the theology of Gregory Palamas to Russia, and disciples of Sergius of Radonezh were on Mount Athos at the height of the hesychast controversy during the fourteenth century (xxii).

Another figure of importance in bringing Athonite hesychasm to Russia was Nilus of Sora, or Nil Sorsky (d. 1508), who wrote some of Russia's first mystical theology in the mid-fifteenth century (xxii–xxiii).

One of the most important stages in the spread of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, and when 'hesychasm met history', (Sherrard 1990: 421) begins with the original publishing of the *Philokalia* in Greek in 1782 by Macarius of Corinth (d. 1805) and Nicodemos the Athonite (d. 1809) (Ware 1977: 6). Both men were Greek monks living on Mount Athos and were involved in a traditionalist movement known as the *kollyvades*. This group maintained that the best way to strengthen the Greek people under Turkish rule was a popular rediscovery of the Byzantine church fathers, rather than looking to the views of Western European Enlightenment that educated Greeks were bringing from their education abroad (Ware 1991: 9–10). *Philokalia*, the title of Macarius and Nicodemos' collection of monastic writings, signifies the 'the love of beauty' or 'love of the good', with beauty or good understood in the Neo-Platonic ideal sense (Gillet 1987: 66). While this is a book in which 'practically all the texts included [. . .] were written by monks, with a monastic readership in mind', Nicodemos' title page and preface assert that it is 'for the general benefit of the Orthodox' and 'all [. . .] who share the Orthodox calling, laity and monks alike' (Ware 1991: 18–9). The two editors of this collection are very clear in their introduction that the *Philokalia* was meant to be not only for monks, but also for Orthodox laypeople (Sherrard 1990: 421). While Nicodemos expresses a concern in the introduction that the text could fall into the hands of those without the proper spiritual guidance, he evidently thinks that the risk is worth the benefits of making it widely available and that 'the fullness of perfection lies within the reach of all without exception' (Ware 1991: 19–20). He seems to recognize the potential not only for spiritual harm but also for criticisms and possible misinterpretations that the publication of the collection could bring. In addition to the good will motive for his decision, other factors probably include a perceived threat to the tradition of hesychasm and a desire to spiritually arm the people with the weapon of interior prayer, as well as a means to renew their Byzantine Christian self-identity in the face of Ottoman occupation (Speake 2002: 33). When the question of spiritual direction comes up in his introduction, Nicodemos suggests that if there is not a spiritual director available, the texts should be read with humility and the aid of the Holy Spirit, which he says is finally one's true spiritual guide (Ware 2005: 10).

The *Philokalia* had a limited immediate impact on Mount Athos and in Greece, but was hugely influential in Russia and Eastern Europe due to the

efforts of Paissy Velichkovsky (d. 1794) (Ware 1991: 20). Paissy was a Moldavian monk who moved to Athos and set up a skete, or small group of monks, and later imported Athonite spirituality back to Neamtu Monastery in Moldavia (Bolshakoff 1977: xi–xii, xxv–xxvi). His most lasting influence was his translation of the Greek *Philokalia* into Slavonic. Despite his serious concerns about the inevitable lack of supervision of some readers and the necessity of guidance in preventing idiosyncratic interpretations and dissociation from liturgical life, Paissy was finally convinced to publish this translation by the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg in 1793 (Brianchaninov 1965: 47–8; Ware 1991: 19). Additionally, the travels of his subordinate Russian monks on Mount Athos and in Moldavia back to their homeland did much to spread Athonite hesychasm more widely across Russia (Bolshakoff 1977: xxv–xxvi).

We have just seen how some writers have emphasized the universality of the Jesus Prayer while others have been significantly less enthusiastic in allowing the prayer's use by non-monastics. Ignatii Brianchaninov (d. 1867) devotes much of his study of the Jesus Prayer to warning the reader of the dangers of spiritual delusion and pride that are endemic in the use of the prayer, even among monks. He is that much more concerned with the enthusiastic use of the Jesus Prayer among the laity. Brianchaninov quotes Paissy Velichkovsky's letter to an Elder Theodosius, in which Paissy states that 'the books of the Fathers, especially those of them which teach true obedience, vigilance of mind and silence, attention and mental prayer (that is, prayer preformed by the mind in the heart), are intended only for the monastic order and not for all Orthodox Christians in general' (Brianchaninov 1965: 47). Continuing, Velichkovsky claims

> it is quite impossible for laypeople to acquire true monastic obedience and perfect denial of the will and reason in everything. So how can laypeople without obedience, by self-direction which is accompanied by delusion, force themselves to such an awful and terrifying work, that is, to such prayer, without any kind of guidance? (47)

Nil Sorsky is also quoted as asking rhetorically 'how much more will laypeople living without obedience be in danger of falling into some kind of delusion if they force themselves to this prayer merely from reading books of this kind?' (48). Regarding the use of the Jesus Prayer, he states:

> To laypeople the practice of this prayer was completely unknown. But now, since the publication of the books of the Fathers, not only the monks know about it, but all Christians as well. That is why I fear and tremble lest

> [. . .] such independent and self-directed souls may expose themselves to delusion. (49)

These ominous warnings are in stark contrast with the aforementioned Nicodemos' certainty that anyone can reach the heights of prayer, whether a monk or a layperson (Ware 1991: 19–20). Ware claims that, while many hesychast authors 'are writing with monks in mind [. . .] the Hesychast teaching was never restricted to an exclusively monastic *milieu*', pointing out that figures such as Gregory Palamas always insisted that the injunction to pray without ceasing was directed at all Christians and not only monks (Ware 1986*d*: 255). As Alexander d'Agapeyeff's introduction to Brianchaninov's study explains, 'although this form of inner prayer was first developed for monks who had renounced the world, there were later, nevertheless, certain religious authorities who advised this practice also for the layman' (Brianchaninov 1965: 9). Thus, some authors tend to be more cautious and pessimistic about the lay use of the Jesus Prayer, while others remain more enthusiastic and optimistic about its use outside of monasteries. This seems to be based primarily on each author's understanding of the relationship between monks and laypeople and whether the Jesus Prayer belonged to one or both groups. But, as D'Agapeyeff continues, 'all were agreed on one point, that at no time should this form of prayer be attempted unless under the direction of a spiritual teacher who would understand all the temptations and dangers which might beset the novice on his religious path' (9).

The efforts of Macarius, Nicodemos and Paissy set into motion the golden age of Russian monasticism during the nineteenth century (Bolshakoff 1977: xi–xii). Paissy's translation of the *Philokalia* was the first version to become popular outside of monasteries and it influenced many influential figures, such as Ignatius Brianchaninov and Theophan the Recluse, who both published the Russian translations of the *Philokalia* in 1857 and 1877. The text by Velichkovsky also left an impression on the Optina elders made famous by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (d. 1881) in *The Brothers Karamazov* and the very popular Russian saint Seraphim of Sarov (Sherrard 1998: 257). *The Way of a Pilgrim* was another consequence of this surge in popularity. This book is the autobiographical tale of a simple peasant who searched the Russian countryside for a way to pray without ceasing. While there is some debate over whether this text was actually written by a peasant, its primary function was to be an instructional guide to prayer that affirmed the applicability of the Jesus Prayer even to simple peasants (Pokrovsky 2003: xv). The Optina elders and other elders around Russia had a significant impact not just on the spiritual lives of their fellow monks, but also on

many individual laypeople who looked to them for advice and thus on the wider cultural and political landscape of the time (Sherrard 1990: 422).

Many consider *The Way of a Pilgrim* evidence that a typically monastic tradition of prayer is also appropriate for laypeople. The unassuming personality of the pilgrim in the story lends credence to the idea that the Jesus Prayer and even the prayer of the heart is a real possibility for anyone who is devoted to God, regardless of social circumstances. In his article 'Pilgrim and Community' (2002), Alexander Golitzin reflects on a new translation of the book and questions the assumption that the narrative is simply a story of a wandering pilgrim. There had already been historical conjectures on the historicity of the character of the pilgrim and Golitzin elaborates on this theme. The basic argument of the article is that 'the pilgrim is a construct, an artifact made up of a number of traditional strands' (237). Golitzin says of the new translation:

> It eliminated whatever materials can be clearly determined to have been added later, notably Bishop Theophan's changes for the 1884 edition, and the result is, as I noted above, a text where the joints and discontinuities are more obvious than in the 'official' version – which is to say that *The Pilgrim's Tale* appears more clearly here in its true nature. It is the work of many hands, all of them monastic, over a period of several decades. (237)

In place of the naïve and earnest person of the pilgrim, the translation reveals a tradition, or group of traditions 'some of which extend into remote Christian antiquity' that are expressed here in 'a program, a conscious theology of spiritual practice, that is both deliberate and sophisticated' (236–7). Golitzin refers to this program as the 'philokalic reform' and suggests that *The Way of a Pilgrim* is the 'very conscious product and voice' of this program (239–40). Reversing popular assumptions on the text, Golitzin suggests that

> far from being the reflection of a popular and lay interest in the teachings of the monastic renewal, this book is as much a product of the monasteries as is the *Philokalia* itself, and [. . .] moreover, it was written and edited by monks in order, precisely, to help create that same popular interest of which it had previously been taken as a sign (240).

He sees the autobiographic nature of the text as an anomaly within the larger literary tradition that relies on an 'insistent, continuous presence of

a community, of a tradition' in which individual experience is always checked against 'the collective witness of the tradition' (240).

For Golitzin, the pilgrim is intentionally portrayed as the common man, a simple Russian peasant, 'who is still capable of assimilating and living out the theology and practice which the Tale's author(s) want to popularize' (240). Golitzin suggests the spirituality and theology of the Jesus Prayer that is presented in the tale are both 'a relatively recent feature of the philokalic reform and the recovery (or at least re-emphasis) of an older tradition whose roots go back further still' (240). The pilgrim's story presents the ancient 'soteriology of theosis, or deification, wrapped up in a nutshell and [. . .] offered to the readers not as monastic esoterica, but as something they may practice and know for themselves' (240). As an example of the 'monastic evangelism of the philokalic reform' Golitzin sees the book as taking 'the innermost life of the cloister and hermitage out into the marketplace' (240). This account is consonant with the aforementioned intentional popularization of the *Philokalia* by Nicodemos and Macarios. According to this theory, the process of popularization was initiated from within an Orthodox monastic context in order to ensure the survival of the tradition of prayer and to help recreate a religious identity based on writings of the Church Fathers. Despite efforts to keep the tradition within a familiar sacramental, liturgical and ecclesiastical context, this popularization enabled the practice to later escape the reach of the Church's authority altogether.

The next major event that contributed to the spread of hesychasm outside of monasteries was the Bolshevik Revolution, which caused many Russian intellectuals to flee into Western Europe. Some Catholic scholars in the early twentieth century had already begun to look at the hesychastic tradition as more than a bygone heresy, as it had often been viewed, and began to give it serious attention in historical studies (Sherrard 1990: 417, 425–6). When Russian theologians arrived following the Revolution, they presented the tradition to Western Europe as more than a historically interesting fossil, but as a transhistorical living tradition that was an integral part of Orthodox Christianity as a whole (417–8). Appearing around this same time, translations of *The Way of a Pilgrim* into German, French and English portrayed hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer as more than a mere historical curiosity (418). During the 1950s, the first translations of selections from the *Philokalia* were published in English and French. Work on full English translations began in 1979 and is not yet complete as of 2008 (Ware 1991: 21). T. S. Eliot was responsible for urging the publication of the first partial English translations of the *Philokalia* by Faber & Faber, which was

an unexpected success (21). The Trappist author Thomas Merton also demonstrated a great deal of interest in the hesychastic tradition during the 1960s and wrote about it on several occasions (Merton 1968, 1973). The general audience in America was first introduced to the Jesus Prayer in the 1961 J. D. Salinger novel *Franny and Zooey*, which depicted a young woman named Franny who goes through a spiritual crisis involving her use of the Jesus Prayer after reading *The Way of a Pilgrim* (Salinger 1961).

Meanwhile, the mid-twentieth century also produced a Russian monastic renaissance on Mount Athos (Sherrard 1990: 429). A primary architect of the revival was Elder Joseph the Hesychast (d. 1959) whose many disciples reinvigorated the hesychastic lifestyle on Athos and abroad (Speake 2002: 34). Another monk to exert influence on this trend was Silouan the Athonite (d. 1938) the spiritual mentor of Elder Sophrony (d. 1993) (Louth 2003: 351–2). Both were raised in Russia and spent numerous years as monks on Mount Athos. Eventually, Sophrony left Athos to establish monasteries in France and in Essex that placed a heavy emphasis on constant use of the Jesus Prayer. Several decades of decline followed this period of Russian monastic renewal on Athos. Since World War II, Greek interest in hesychastic spirituality has grown, possibly influenced by a similar revival in North America as well as translations of the *Philokalia* into Modern Greek. This has also occurred in many post-Soviet states such as Russia and Romania, where it has become increasingly popular among the lay-Orthodox.

In the past several decades, Greek monks and abbots from Mount Athos have established numerous monasteries in North America based on Athonite models that employ the Jesus Prayer and hesychastic lifestyle. In particular Elder Ephraim, former abbot of Philotheou monastery on Mount Athos and a disciple of Joseph the Hesychast (d. 1959), has created seventeen such monasteries in the United States (Speake 2002: 177). Along with the influx of immigrant families of Orthodox backgrounds, many monks at these monasteries are converts to the Orthodox Church who have had no previous relation to this tradition. In 2008, books about hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer written from a number of standpoints were readily available online and in many bookstores. Corresponding to the ubiquity and availability of the text is an increasing knowledge of the practice outside of the Orthodox Church. Ware takes notice of this relation between written texts and the popularity of the practices and gives some credit to the books for the contemporary 'Hesychast renaissance' (Ware 1986*d*: 258). Members of Christian denominations as varied as Anglicanism and the Emerging Church have made reference to hesychasm in their own writings and incorporated them into instructions to their own followers. Those from

other religions and those from no particular tradition have also often found these writings inspiring and relevant to their own lives. Ware points out that while the *Philokalia* was originally published for eighteenth-century Greeks under Ottoman rule, ironically, the true 'age of the *Philokalia*' is the late twentieth century and it is likely more popular now than it has ever been (1991: 22).

As we have seen, the practices of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm began in a predominately monastic context in which disciples were directly instructed by their spiritual guides. Although conversations and aphorisms were written down, collected and passed down in early centuries to help instruct monks, the primary means of instruction and guidance was the institution of spiritual discipleship, or the elder-disciple relationship.[3] In this context, monks were guided by their spiritual elders with whom they were in regular face-to-face contact and from whom they learned the principles of prayer directly. Written texts acted as auxiliaries to this personal relationship. Thus, the primary mode of transmission was through direct and typically oral guidance[4] based on an asymmetrical relationship of spiritual teacher and pupil. Even with the multiplication of available texts in monasteries, as long as the practices were within the elder-disciple framework, direct oral instruction was considered an essential means of transmission.

We have seen how the editors of texts like the *Philokalia* were concerned even prior to publication about the texts' potential misuse and misinterpretation by those without guidance and therefore constantly stressed the need for a personal spiritual guide in prayer. Philip Sherrard describes how Paissy Velichkovsky, like Nicodemos of the Holy Mountain, believed prayer of the heart was available to laypeople (Sherrard 1990: 422). Despite agreeing with Nicodemos, Paissy felt that it was necessary to preface his approval with warnings on proper guidance. Sherrard describes Paissy's motivations for these warnings in clear terms:

> To safeguard the personalization of the spiritual life, to protect this life from the vagaries of individual interpretation and disposition, and to prevent its dissociation from the liturgical life of the church and the heritage of the Greek fathers. (422)

When collections of these monastic texts were first published and sold publicly, a sequence of events began that would eventually lead to the present situation of contested and varied understandings. Initially, particularly edifying instructions were written down and transmitted to accompany a

monk's personal instruction by his or her own elder. Then, for reasons stated in the above history, [5] the texts were published as aids for the prayer lives of Christian laypeople who were also expected to have a priest or monk as a personal spiritual guide. As the texts were published more widely they fell beyond the sphere of influence of monasteries and, eventually, of the elder-disciple relationship and Orthodox context from which they emerged. As a result of entering new settings that lacked the same spiritual elder-disciple framework, there was a lack of available guides and a parallel lack of societal familiarity and resonance with the institution of eldership. Consequently, the written texts came unhinged from the direct oral transmission between elder and disciple, thus changing the direct oral tradition to one that was primarily mediated and written. Eventually, when sufficiently separated from the direct authority of the Orthodox Church, the texts themselves became guides. In settings where there was no possibility for direct guidance because of a scarcity of guides, the texts were said to be replacements for an elder, when read in the appropriate spirit of humility and caution (Ware 2005: 10).

Another response to this situation is the claim that, while having an elder is always preferable, it is actually the Holy Spirit who is one's true guide and eldership is a concrete manifestation of this higher relationship. For example, even some contemporary Orthodox clergy advise that 'if we lack a *geronta*, then let us trust the Holy Spirit; for in the last resort He is the one true spiritual guide' (10). This interpretation is, in part, a reaction to the lack of available guides that redefines eldership in order to accommodate new circumstances, while maintaining the tradition by insisting that having a guide is still the best possible scenario. Metropolitan Kallistos Ware repeatedly emphasizes this notion:

> The majority of the authors to whom we have referred to were monks, writing in the first instance for other monks. Yet it should not therefore be assumed that they regarded the way of hesychasm and the use of the Jesus Prayer as impossible outside a monastic setting. On the contrary, in their eyes this way possessed universal value. (Ware 1985: 412–13)

In support of this position, Ware cites several Church Fathers, such as Symeon the New Theologian who insists that one living in 'the world' can attain the hesychastic vision of God and that it is possible to live the heavenly life, not only in monastic cells but also in cities. According to Ware, Gregory Palamas himself said constant prayer was for all Christians and not only monks (413). Additionally, Nicholas Cabasilas insisted that there is

no need to give up one's profession or change one's lifestyle to practice continual prayer (413). Ware extends this to the present day when he claims that

> Contemporary Christians who have learned to use the Jesus Prayer will testify from their own experience that Cabasilas is speaking the truth. [. . .] The Jesus Prayer makes it possible for each of us to be an 'urban hesychast', preserving inwardly a secret center of stillness in the midst of our outward pressures, carrying the desert with us in our hearts wherever we go. (413)

This chapter has reviewed several major periods in the history of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm: the emergence of the practices from the Egyptian desert, the Golden Age of hesychasm in fourteenth-century Byzantium, the Renaissance in Greece in the late eighteenth century, the Russian flowering in the nineteenth century, as well as the modern period. In the process, several important overarching factors have emerged (Ware 1966: 32). These could be roughly distinguished as literary, geographic, political and theological factors. The literary factors relate to a shift in the medium of transmission of the practices. Beginning as oral traditions that were passed from elder to disciple, texts regarding the practices were written down, then gradually compiled, published, circulated and translated. This enabled the practices to become more widely accessible to the general public. Another reason for the spread of the practices was the geographic relocation of people from areas where tradition of prayer was well known into countries in which it previously had little or no presence. Ware states that 'chiefly through contact with the Russian *diaspora*, many western people have also come to know and love the Jesus Prayer' (32). This included the relocation of influential monks and theologians and also the large-scale relocation of populations of people from countries where the Orthodox Church was prominent. We have also seen political factors play an important role in the history of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, as when these practices were spread in order to create or strengthen a cultural self-image as a form of resistance against ruling powers. The fourteenth-century theological debates on hesychasm also brought the practices to the attention of a wider public and the related councils further established their orthodoxy, authority and ongoing presence in the church. Additionally, the spread of the Jesus Prayer was certainly aided by the fact that it is such a short and memorable phrase, a reason many proponents cite as a theological and missiological strength.

Chapter 4

Survey: Where Have the Practices Spread?

In this chapter, I will introduce readings of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm from several contexts. The chapter will begin in the Orthodox Church and will move on to the various other Christian denominations and then to non-Christian groups for whom the practices play some role. In some cases it may seem self-evident why certain groups find a resonance with the practices and their own tradition, perhaps due to historical, doctrinal or ideological connections. Often, it is not these but other, less obvious connections that provide the most illustrative adaptations and understandings of the practices. The various degrees or levels of engagement with the practices will be important to note since this will reveal how the practices are understood in relation to a particular worldview as a whole. For instance, one author may mention the practices in his or her writings once or twice as analogous to practices from other context in order to claim a connection between them. Another author may discuss the Jesus Prayer often as the focal point of his or her prayer life. The level of engagement with the practices will shed light upon the various uses that different groups make of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer and their purposes for doing so. In the next chapter, discussions within and between these groups will further elaborate several common themes and leitmotivs that are found in this chapter, which will eventually guide us to a better understanding of the roles the practices play in various settings and how these settings can be distinguished.

To start out with the most obvious example, the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are very prevalent today among groups and individuals that are affiliated with the Orthodox Church. Not as much space will be devoted to this setting since it has formed the traditional description of the practices found in Chapter 2. Despite fluctuations in their popularity over time, the practices have been important in the history of the Orthodox Church and continue to be important in the lives of many who live within this tradition. As apparent in early monastic writings, the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm have

a long history in the Orthodox Church, but they have not always been as popular in lay and monastic settings as they are today.

We have already seen how the prayer went from a primarily oral monastic tradition to a more widespread written tradition and how, in the process, it has also become more known and practised by laity. The same can be said of its place in Orthodox monastic life. While interior prayer has been central to the lives of Orthodox monks since the Desert Fathers of the fourth century, the exact formulation of the Jesus Prayer and the details of the tradition of prayer surrounding it developed over time. Throughout the history of the Jesus Prayer's existence, it has waxed and waned in its popularity and use in monasteries, as seen in the comments of Gregory of Sinai upon arriving on Mount Athos (Brianchaninov 1965: 99–100). Although certain monastic communities kept the tradition alive over the centuries up to the present day, one can speak of periods of decline and renewal of the tradition within the monastic world as a whole. The present day can definitely be considered a time of renaissance, as the Jesus Prayer (in one of its several variations) is central to the prayer life in most Orthodox monasteries in the world.

Similar fluctuations are even more noticeable in the history of its lay usage. It appears not to have emerged as a widespread lay practice until after the publishing of the *Philokalia*. While the Jesus Prayer has probably only recently reached the current level of attention and devotion from Orthodox lay communities, there are instances of it being recommended to the laity in monastic literature and indications of the lay practice of continual prayer more generally. Nevertheless, the birth, or perhaps rebirth, of the widespread lay-use of the Jesus Prayer is perhaps more noteworthy than its current monastic popularity since there is less historical evidence of the prayer's vitality outside of monasteries.

Despite the oscillating popularity in the history of the practice, the overall level of engagement with the prayer today is perhaps most intimate in the Orthodox setting. Not only do Orthodox authors draw upon the hesychastic tradition and its literature for inspiration and to assert this tradition as their own, but many authors also insist that the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm play central roles in all aspects of their own life and their church's past and present. Typically, the relationship of Orthodox authors to the Jesus Prayer is not strictly literary but is a part of their daily life, as concretely seen in the prayer's inclusion in many daily prayer books and in the widespread use of prayer ropes.

There have been numerous books recently written by and about spiritual elders and monks of the Orthodox Church that describe the hesychastic

tradition and the proper use of the Jesus Prayer (Vlachos 1991). Usually assuming a general familiarity and agreement with a wider Orthodox outlook, these books are published by Orthodox publishing houses, sold in many parish bookshops and are very popular among the general Orthodox lay audience as a primary source of inspiration and guidance for everyday living. There is an endless amount of literature in this genre and it presents us with the traditional view of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, usually conforming to the doctrines and canons of the Orthodox Church.

One example of this genre is *Wounded By Love: The Life and Wisdom of Elder Porphyrios*, a book that recounts the life and teachings of a contemporary Greek charismatic elder, Porphyrios (Sisters of the Holy Convent of Chrysopigi 2005). The book, originally written in Greek and then translated several years later into English, was 'compiled after his [Porphyrios'] death from an archive of notes and recordings of his reminiscences, conversations and words of guidance' by nuns from a monastery he founded (back cover). Like many similar works, this book is beloved by a wide audience of both laypeople and clergy for its 'simple, deeply reflected and profoundly wise words' (back cover). Elder Porphyrios is lauded by a wide audience of Orthodox laypeople for his spiritual insight and holiness and cherished for his ability to present complex theological and ascetic traditions in language that can be approached by a large general public. In fact, the nuns who edited the text stress the trans-cultural and inter-denominational nature of his writing, saying, 'the differences which distinguish the culture of Eastern Orthodoxy from that of Western Christianity will not prevent the Western reader from responding to Elder Porphyrios' simple, lucid and vivid narrative' (ix).

Elder Porphyrios himself praises the Jesus Prayer as 'the most effective prayer the Church Fathers use' and 'the key to the spiritual life' (119). He insists that it 'cannot be taught either by books, or by spiritual fathers or by anyone else. Its sole teacher is divine grace' (119). The elder also claims that only the Holy Spirit and an atmosphere of grace can inspire the Jesus Prayer as opposed to the simple repetition of the words. Similarly Porphyrios sees obedience as necessary to cultivate humility and love, which are true prayer's prerequisites (119). Emphasizing the need for gentleness rather than force in prayer, Porphyrios claims that when the Jesus Prayer is prayed 'with tenderness of soul, with love, with longing, [. . .] then it doesn't appear at all as a chore to you' (120).

There are several guidebooks to both the *Philokalia* and *The Way of a Pilgrim* that are written for a contemporary lay audience. One of these is *Philokalia: The Bible of Orthodox Spirituality* by Anthony M. Coniaris, which

is described by its subtitle as *Orthodox Spirituality for the Lay Person* (1998). The aim of this book is 'to bring Orthodox spirituality out of the monasteries into our everyday living' (283). In his preface to the book, Stanley S. Harakas says this popularization is necessary because the *Philokalia* 'is a buried treasure, inaccessible to the ordinary Orthodox Christian because its primary audience is the Orthodox monastic community' (iii). Harakas advises that rather than falsely assuming the appearance of monastic life to 'share in this spiritual treasure', laypeople 'must live the spiritual life in the context of *their* calling' (iii). Coniaris' task is further explained as being 'to translate the *Philokalia*, not from its original Greek, but from its original format as it arose in the monastic tradition of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The translation is into a format that can be appropriated by Orthodox Christians who want to live spiritually in the life-circumstances to which they have been called' (iv). Regarding the themes of the *Philokalia*, Harakas says, 'in their outer clothing, their "presentation" changes, so they may become accessible to "the rest of us"' (iv).

Coniaris himself claims that 'if anyone is searching for spirituality – God's true spirituality – his thirst will be quenched beyond expectation not in Zen or Buddhism or Hinduism but in the spirituality of the Sweet Jesus as it is brought to us through the *Philokalia*' (8). He argues this against the claim of a Protestant Christian who became a Zen monk because he claimed not to find any spirituality in his own church. For Coniaris, 'the spiritual path outlined in the *Philokalia* is inextricably bound up with the specific sacramental and liturgical life of the Orthodox Church. To attempt to practise it apart from its sacramental and liturgical moorings is to cut it off from its living roots. It will wither and die' (8). The author speaks at length on the question of whether the *Philokalia* is intended only for monks:

> Furthermore, the *Philokalia* was written not only for those living within the sacramental and liturgical framework of the Orthodox Church, but, more specifically, for those living in the Orthodox monastic tradition. Does this mean that the counsels of the *Philokalia* are only for monks? Many of the hesychast writers go out of their way to assure us that unceasing prayer and the other counsels are for monks and laypeople as well, since all were created in the image of God and are striving for theosis. What is essential is that, whether within or outside a monastic environment, the advice of a qualified spiritual father or elder be sought. If such guidance is not to be found, then the active participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church is always essential. (8–9)

Those laypeople who adopt the spirit of humility, obedience and purity found in the *Philokalia* are referred to here as 'untonsured monks' and 'true monk[s] of interiorized monasticism' (9). Coniaris says, 'the influence of the *Philokalia* among the Orthodox is second only to the Bible [. . .] because the Philokalia is nothing more than a living out of the Bible' (8). Additionally, the spirituality of the *Philokalia* is described as part of the inheritance that Orthodox Christians should claim, but are often not even aware of (9).

In the Introduction to the Russian collection *The Art of Prayer*, first published in 1936 by Igumen Chariton of the Valamo monastery, Kallistos Ware points out a similar tendency (1966). Though some excerpts in the collection are taken from the *Philokalia*, most are taken from Bishop Theophan the Recluse and Bishop Ignatii Brianchaninov in the late nineteenth century. Ware speculates that this may be the case 'perhaps out of a desire to keep his anthology as simple and intelligible as possible: he may have feared that the *Philokalia* would prove too difficult for many readers' whereas the writings of the other two figures 'contain precisely the same basic teaching as the Greek texts in the *Philokalia*, but present it in a form that can be more easily assimilated by Christians of the twentieth century' (16). The book also avoids referring to the higher stages of prayer because 'those without personal experience of such prayer will not understand what is said, while those who have themselves experienced it will have little further need of books' (23).

The same is true of breathing aids to the Jesus Prayer, which are only mentioned occasionally and with some disapproval (35). Ware expects that 'this reticence will doubtless disappoint a number of western readers, who see in Hesychasm a kind of Christian Yoga; what has attracted many non-Orthodox to the Jesus Prayer in recent years and has fascinated them most, has been precisely the bodily exercises' (35). This approach to inner prayer would have been disapproved of by Theophan and Ignatii, says Ware, as 'the breathing exercises are nothing more than an accessory [. . .] useful to some but not obligatory upon all' (35). Ware recommends the utmost discretion in using breathing techniques since, 'if misapplied, [they] can gravely damage the health and even lead to insanity, as some have recently discovered to their cost' and points out that 'Orthodox writers normally insist that anyone practising the physical method should be under the close guidance of an experienced spiritual director' (35). Without such guidance, Ware recommends using the prayer without bodily techniques, as 'they are in no sense an essential part of the Jesus Prayer, which can be practiced in its fullness without them' (35). He cites a passage from

Theophan to support this claim: 'We advise our beloved brethren not to try to practise this mechanical technique unless it establishes itself in them of its own accord' (36).

Ware insists that 'the practice of the Jesus Prayer (with or without the breathing technique) presupposes full and active membership of the Church' and 'save in very exceptional cases, the Jesus Prayer does not dispense us from the normal obligations of the Christian life' (36). He says the authors of the collection 'take it for granted that their readers are practising Orthodox Christians' who are involved in the sacramental life of baptism, regular liturgy, frequent confession and communion (36). 'If they [the authors] say little about these things, this is not because they consider them unimportant, but because they assume that anyone proposing to use the Jesus Prayer is already properly instructed in the standard teaching of the Church' (36). Ware reflects on the current popularity of the prayer:

> But in the west today the situation is rather different. Some of those attracted to the Jesus Prayer are not practising Christians at all: indeed, what arouses their interest is precisely the fact that the Jesus Prayer appears as something fresh, exciting, and exotic, while the more familiar practices of ordinary Church life strike them as dull and uninspiring (36).

To these seekers, Ware remarks that 'under normal conditions a balanced and regular sacramental life is a *sine qua non* for anyone practising the Prayer. [. . .] Communion must come first, and then the Prayer; the Invocation of the Name is not a substitute for the Eucharist, but an added enrichment' (36–7).

Ware also addresses several other aspects of the Jesus Prayer. He notes that while it is especially recommended for monk and hermits, 'it is a prayer particularly well adapted to the tensions of the modern world [. . .] equally a prayer for lay people [. . .] for those engaged in active social work' (37). It can be said in any situation, including during the most mundane tasks, and 'fits every stage in the spiritual life, from the most elementary to the most advanced' (37). Also, when the prayer is described as an easy or quick way to unceasing prayer, this is relative to other ways of prayer, all of which are difficult, especially in the initial stages, and require ascetic struggle against the passions and the imagination (36).

While some hesychastic theology is not officially endorsed by the Catholic Church, such as the Palamite distinction of essence and energies, there has been a significant amount of interest in the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm within the Roman Church in the last sixty years or so. What began as

more or less a scholarly translation project within Catholicism in the early twentieth century, eventually led to the discovery and even endorsement of many post-Schism Eastern Church Fathers who wrote on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. The impact of this can be seen in the writings of well-known Roman Catholic authors of the mid-twentieth century such as Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen (Merton 1968, 1973; Nouwen 1975; Ford 2006). Byzantine-era Fathers such as Symeon the New Theologian and Maximus the Confessor as well as more recent Orthodox elders and saints such as Seraphim of Sarov, Theophan the Recluse and Silouan the Athonite have received much attention from these and other authors. Today the Jesus Prayer is quite well known and its practice quite widespread in the Roman Catholic world and its monasteries.[1]

One movement within the Catholic Church that shows a particular affinity with the Jesus Prayer is the Centering Prayer movement (Pennington 1980).[2] This movement was popularized in the 1970s by a group of Benedictine monks and uses the Jesus Prayer as one source for its own adaptation of the practice of contemplative prayer. In the last few decades, Benedictine monks have also been granted permission to stay on Mount Athos for atypically extended periods and have written about their moving experiences during the visits (Pennington 1978). Another group influenced by the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm is the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM), which derives from the teaching of Fr. John Main and Fr. Lawrence Freeman on the Christian practice of mantra using the Aramaic prayer-phrase *Maranatha*, or 'Come, Lord' (Main 1982). Several views on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm that have come from Roman Catholic perspectives in recent years will now be examined.

In his book *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, Henri Nouwen takes an interest in the tradition of hesychasm, which he says 'has a remarkably modern ring to it' and 'is gradually being discovered by the West as one of the most valuable "schools" of prayer' (Nouwen 1975: 100–1).[3] Nouwen says that 'among the many spiritualities, styles of prayer and ways to God, there is one way [hesychasm] that is relatively unknown but might prove to have special relevance in our contemporary spiritual climate' (100). Nouwen speaks of hesychasm as 'one of the oldest spiritual traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church' (100). Hesychastic prayer of the heart 'shows us one possible way' as 'a special guide to the present-day Christian searching for [one's] own personal way to an intimate relationship to God' (105). Nouwen warns that people should not cling to the romanticism of the story of *The Way of a Pilgrim*, as did Franny in *Franny and*

Zooey, and thus be led into mental confusion, but should put the prayer into daily practice as a way to engage in everyday life while still remaining unified (104–5). Nouwen's biographer Michael Ford claims that the hesychastic tradition, especially as represented in the *Philokalia* and *The Art of Prayer* collections, was an influence on Nouwen and that, additionally, Nouwen said 'he had probably learned more about the spiritual life from that tradition than from any Western spiritual writers' (Ford 2006: 10). Regardless of the highs and lows in Nouwen's life, 'somehow the Jesus Prayer had never abandoned him even during his driest periods' (10).

The Trappist monk and author Fr. Louis (Thomas) Merton also mentions hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer on many occasions in his published writings and journals. It appears Merton had begun to use the Jesus Prayer himself by 1957, 11 years before his death and in his book *Contemplative Prayer*, he shows an interest and good grasp of *hesychia* and the Jesus Prayer (1973). In his journals late in his life he considers how a simple 'spiritual instrument' such as the Jesus Prayer would be easier to transplant into the West than long and complex Tibetan *upayas* (Burton et al. 1974: 72). His book *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* shows his admiration for the popular nineteenth and twentieth-century Russian/Athonite hesychasts St. Theophan and St. Silouan (Merton 1968: 147, 268). In an interesting turn of events, some Orthodox writers have themselves recently cited Merton's writings that refer to the prayer of the heart as authoritative (Cutsinger 2002: 2).

In 2003, *Merton & Hesychasm: Prayer of the Heart and the Eastern Church* was published as a guide to all of Merton's writings that relate to Eastern Christian Church Fathers and Orthodox traditions of prayer (Montaldo and Henry 2003). The book also contains many studies of the impact of Orthodox Christianity on Merton's thinking and writing, in addition to several articles on Orthodox prayer more generally. Canon A. M. Allchin contributes several articles, one of which aims to show that 'Merton's basic understanding of the nature of mysticism and theology was decisively influenced by Orthodox models', as well as the influence of Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas and the impact of Russian writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Alexander Schmemann and Theophan the Recluse (103–4). In a second essay, Allchin highlights the influence of Gregory of Nyssa, Vladimir Lossky, George Florovsky, Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Paul Evdokimov and the contemporary French Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément (121–3). Allchin notes that, as early as 1950, Merton had been exposed to current Russian theology such as Lossky's

work (135). M. Basil Pennington contributes a chapter entitled 'Thomas Merton and Byzantine Spirituality' in which he claims, 'I do not think it would be possible to exaggerate the importance of the influence of Byzantine spirituality and especially that of the Fathers of Eastern Christendom on the development of Merton's well-integrated spirituality' (153). Another interesting article found in this collection is an essay by Archbishop Rowan Williams on Merton and Paul Evdokimov that was written when Williams was nineteen years old (175–96). Among the several relevant selections from Merton's own writings are a piece on Mount Athos and its tradition of prayer (311–22) and the introduction to Serge Bolshakoff's *Russian Mystics* (333–41; Bolshakoff 1977).

It seems that the Orthodox practice of hesychastic prayer was, for Merton, one contemplative tradition among many that enriched his own prayer life and understanding of prayer. He was also influenced by other forms of prayer and meditation, such as Zen Buddhist practice. Although he found the hesychastic tradition compelling and felt that 'there are strong "hesychast" tendencies in me', it was not his sole source of spiritual sustenance (Merton 1973: 213). Another Catholic figure who brought hesychasm into a discussion of Zen meditation is the Irish Catholic priest William Johnston. Johnston's *Christian Zen* (1971) was popular during the early 1970s and refers to the Jesus Prayer and *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Although there is no extensive elaboration of hesychasm or the Jesus Prayer, Johnston quotes the *Philokalia* to give an example of attention to breathing in a Christian context.

Father Thomas Keating is one of the main proponents of the Centering Prayer movement that emerged from St. Joseph's Trappist Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts in the 1970s. In his book *Intimacy with God: An Introduction to Centering Prayer*, he asks: 'Could we put the Christian tradition into a form that would be accessible to people [. . .] who have been instructed in an Eastern technique and might be inspired to return to their Christian roots if they knew there was something similar in the Christian tradition?' (Keating 1996: 15). He and several of his fellow Trappist monks, such as M. Basil Pennington, have addressed this question by looking for inspiration in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the writings of John of the Cross and the practice of the Jesus Prayer. Keating is quoted several times on the Contemplative Research website in reference to the Jesus Prayer. Fr. Keating recommends practising 'Guard of the Heart', which he describes as 'a watchfulness that notices when we lose our sense of peace'. Keating writes that if we do not have time to 'sleuth back' and identify a cause of

emotional disturbance, 'it may be simpler just to use another practice we call an Active Prayer Sentence. It is like the Jesus prayer, a prayer that you say over and over again until it says itself'.[4] Fr. Keating compares the Christian contemplative tradition to a blend of fine herb teas:

> *The Cloud of Unknowing* is one. Others are the Jesus Prayer, Lectio Divina, aspirations (the repetition of phrases from scripture) [. . .]. Centering Prayer is a blend of elements drawn from these traditions. Our primary source is *The Cloud of Unknowing*, but we have incorporated other 'teas' to establish a special blend.

In another article Fr. Keating claims that there are several methods of contemplation in Christianity, which are expressed by Centering Prayer and John Main's Christian Meditation.[5] He ascribes the rapid spread of these methods to a 'hunger for spirituality in our culture today', a hunger that prompted Keating and fellow Trappists to 'develop a method in which to express the Christian contemplative heritage'. When Keating noticed 'the movement to the East was very strong among Roman Catholics', he wondered why they did not instead go to Christian monasteries. When asked by an interviewer why Roman Catholics did not look to their monasteries for this spirituality, Fr. Keating replied: 'They had never heard of Christian contemplative practices'. The Centering Prayer movement can be seen as a response to this increasing lack of interest in the spirituality of the West and an attempt to revitalize Christian spirituality.

John Main, who was responsible for formulating and popularizing Christian Meditation from the 1970s, elaborates on this point in his book *Letters from the Heart*: 'Why have they [young people] then rejected the Christian religious structure of the West? Perhaps the reason is that we in the West have become too religious rather than truly spiritual. [. . .] This experience has to be personal if it is to be real' (Main 1982: 102). Addressing this concern became his central preoccupation in developing Christian Meditation and the World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM), whose website contains many references to the Jesus Prayer. According to Bede Griffiths, Main first learned about the practice of mantra from a Hindu swami in India and later 'discovered in Cassian, the Christian monk of the fifth century, the same method of the mantra and realized that it was part of the authentic Christian tradition'.[6] Griffiths states that Main came to the conclusion that this tradition had been passed from the Egyptian Desert Fathers into the Middle Ages, 'especially in the

tradition of the Jesus Prayer in the eastern Church' and also in *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Main considered this tradition to have been 'lost in subsequent ages' and he ' "saw as his vocation to renew" it'.

In the words of Fr. Lawrence Freeman, the disciple of John Main, 'the Jesus prayer is clearly the mantra of the Orthodox Church', while Cassian's formula and the contemplative work of *The Cloud of Unknowing* were the equivalent in the Western tradition, both with a heritage traceable to the Desert Fathers.[7] Freeman and Main use all of these traditions of prayer to add authority and precedent to Christian Meditation. In the words of Paul Harris,

> It can be seen from the practice of the 'formula' and later the Jesus Prayer that the practice of Christian Meditation came from the same spiritual roots and the same desert tradition. The tradition of the 'formula', the Jesus prayer and the mantra maranatha came out of the identical same tradition of silent, unceasing prayer practised by the early desert monks.[8]

Harris claims that 'the similarities between Cassian's "formula", the Jesus Prayer and Christian Meditation are expressions of the deeper practice of prayer in the Christian tradition'. But rather than using the Jesus Prayer, John Main 'went back to the desert tradition of Cassian and chose an alternative mantra to a biblical phrase with the name of Jesus'. He chose *maranatha* or 'Come, Lord Jesus', because 'for Western head-centred people, [. . .] the word Jesus can immediately start us to picturing Jesus, and limiting our relationship to Him by merely thinking about Christ'. By using Aramaic, 'a language that would not conjure up any thoughts or images', Main intends to make imageless prayer easier. Harris, hastens to add, 'it should be noted however that the Jesus Prayer mantra and Fr. John's mantra both spring from the same source, the spirituality of the 4th century desert monks'. Further emphasizing the connection, Harris says 'the Jesus Prayer is part of this great historical tradition and is joined with the present day practice of Christian Meditation and other forms of contemplative prayer'.

While Cassian is said to link the East and West by bringing the wisdom of the desert ascetics in Egypt to the West, Adelbert de Vogué, monk at French Benedictine monastery La Pierre-Qui-Vire, writes that 'in the case of Main this meeting between East and West expands beyond the Christian East to include the pagan Far-East. Thanks to Cassian – who would have believed it? – a Hindu practice finds the right to be applied in Christianity'.[9] According to de Vogué, Cassian thus unintentionally 'puts his Western

readers in communication with two other traditions which will span the centuries: Hinduism with its mantra [. . .] and Greek hesychasm with its "Jesus prayer" '. De Vogué sees the connections between traditions as a-historical in nature: 'Apparently independent of each other the Egyptian monasticism of the 4th century, later Byzantine monasticism and Hindu spirituality of all times discovered and employed this kind of mystical law [of mantra]'. While there is tension between the Christian Meditation understanding of the Jesus Prayer and the Orthodox Christian understanding, a visible figure such as Metropolitan Kallistos Ware has led the John Main seminar for the WCCM.[10]

Another interesting perspective within Roman Catholicism is from the French Benedictine Henri Le Saux, who, upon moving to India and living 'as one of their holy men in a hermitage', took the name Abhishiktananda (Abhishiktananda 1972: back cover). In his book *Prayer*, he compares *namajapa*, or 'prayer of the name', in yoga and the Jesus Prayer in the Christian East, arguing that both of these practices are forms of *namajapa*, which he says is the most efficient form of *mantra* (51–8). While Abhishiktananda does write occasionally about the Jesus Prayer in relation to yoga in *Prayer*, it is his contemporary Jacques-Albert Cuttat who discussed the topic in greater depth.

Abhishiktananda and his fellow Benedictine in India, Bede Griffiths, were members of a 'pioneering group, convened in the early sixties by Dr Jacques-Albert Cuttat, the Swiss Ambassador to India', who was attempting to explore spirituality in India as it related to Christian spirituality, including the Jesus Prayer.[11] Cuttat wrote a book titled *The Encounter of Religions* with the aim 'to confront these traditions not in opposition from without, but from within at the point where they meet in the experience of God' (1960). A large portion of this text is an analysis of hesychasm in an attempt to 'to draw out its fundamentally Christian dimension: the eminently "received" and "freely given" nature of Hesychast deification' (87). Also, the section on hesychasm considers, on the basis that 'Hesychasm attempts to incorporate essentially non-Monotheistic practices and perspectives into Christian *theosis* [. . .] the dangers, the limitations and the value of the Hesychast method' (87–8). While he is not overly critical of hesychastic prayer towards the beginning of his essay, later in the text he begins to bring charges against the tradition, which typically relate to a perceived methodologization of interior prayer life that ultimately rests the full responsibility of *theosis* on humans rather than God, limiting God's will to deify regardless of individual spiritual states and efforts (120). Though he admits that some defenders of the practice say 'none of the

advocates of the Athonite technique has ever written that it was a requisite for the prayer of Jesus', he seems to distrust this claim (121). The majority of his criticisms are admonitions regarding, not particular figures and historical cases, but potential dangers he sees as inherent tendencies in hesychastic thought and practice. In essence, this is an instance of the age-old debate in Christianity over faith and works, grace and effort which repeatedly surfaces in many other debates and conversations regarding the Jesus Prayer (121).

The popularity of the *The Way of a Pilgrim* in the English-speaking world in the last half-century has led to several different translations and many different editions of the text. One of these is structured as a reader's guide and workbook with a summary, reflection, query and activity accompanying each chapter (Billy 2000: ix). This version was edited by a Redemptorist named Dennis J. Billy who teaches at the Academia Alfonsiana in Rome.[12] Billy emphasizes the function of *The Way of a Pilgrim* as the lens through which to view the *Philokalia*, as the *Philokalia* is the lens through which to view the Christian Bible (ix). *The Way of a Pilgrim* is the simplified commentary on the *Philokalia*, which brings the collection to a general audience without sacrificing its essential message and teachings (vii–viii). In a similar way, it seems that this edition is meant to serve as a simplified version of the story of the pilgrim that 'often makes explicit what the pilgrim leaves implicit' also acting as a lens through which to view the original text (ix).

Billy acknowledges that his commentary on the text is not exhaustive but only seeks to 'help readers initiate a process of reflection [which] will ultimately help readers arrive at a deeper understanding of their own model of spiritual direction and to see what elements of the tradition of spiritual guidance present in *The Way* might be applicable to it' (x). In elaborating on this point, he claims that 'the thrust of this method is not to win adherents to a particular approach to spiritual guidance, but to invite readers to discover what elements of that tradition resonate within their own hearts and can be incorporated into their own spirituality' (x). He goes on to note some of the limitations of the book as a 'tool in spiritual direction' such as its particular historical context, suggesting that readers not imitate every detail described in the book (xi). Rather, the reader should 'make appropriate judgements about the spiritual life that can be applied analogously to one's current situation' (xi). Although not everything can be easily adapted to the lives of readers, one thing that does translate across time and space is the claim that 'the invocation of his

[Jesus'] holy name in the concrete circumstances of life will produce beneficial effects in both the internal and external lives of believers' which is 'the central teaching of the hesychast tradition' (xi).

Billy stresses that the text should not be approached as 'step-by-step directions on how to pray the Jesus Prayer' (xi–xii) but its instructions should be 'always adapted to the circumstances of particular individuals and [. . .] especially suited to fit them at that particular moment of life' (xii). To do otherwise would be to 'relegate prayer to the level of a system' (xii). The editor also reminds us that the pilgrim is a poor layman with little education, thus proving the broad applicability of the prayer and the availability of sanctity to anyone and not simply an elite few. Billy claims that 'this emphasis on the universal call to holiness was an important shift in the religious outlook of the Pilgrim's day' (xii). He also sees the role of the *staretz* and spiritual father in the story as providing 'the parameters within which spiritual guidance takes place in the book' (xiii). Another focus for Billy is in the secondary importance of the instruments that the pilgrim finds in the Bible, the *Philokalia*, his staretz and even the Jesus Prayer (xiii). Instead, 'throughout the book it is really the Spirit of God who leads the Pilgrim on his spiritual journey – no one else. [. . .] It is the Spirit who teaches the Pilgrim this interior prayer of the heart' (xiii). Summarizing his purpose as the end of his introduction, the editor says that he hopes to 'apply the richness of *The Way* and the *hesychast* tradition it represents to some of the pressing spiritual concern of our day, especially those dealing with the ministry of spiritual direction' (xiv). Thus this version of the text is primarily aimed at spiritual directors and directees.

Throughout his commentaries, the editor makes several noteworthy comments. While the pilgrim is writing 'specifically as a member of Eastern Orthodoxy', Billy reminds us that 'his teaching is broad-based and universal enough for use by Latin Catholics and members of other Christian denominations' (17). Later, he says that, due to the personal nature of the account, 'it would be unrealistic of us to demand relevance [of the story to our lives] in every respect' (19). Billy asks the readers: 'What do you make of the Jesus Prayer? Does it appeal to you? What do you like about it? What don't you like about it? Is it an integral part of your prayer life? Do you want it to be?' (34). Continuing the questioning, he asks, 'should a spiritual director be directive? non-directive? a companion for you on your spiritual journey? [. . .] What are the qualities you look for in a good spiritual director? [. . .] If you are more eclectic in your spiritual outlook, how do you go about deciding which elements suit you and which do

not?' (34–5). Later, he warns directors that they 'must be careful not to force this particular prayer form on their directees or present it in such a way that it is the only one with any validity' (183).

Billy describes the progression of the pilgrim as being a shift from one who is 'dependent on spiritual guides and other external helps' to one who is 'more self-directive in his spiritual journey' and who 'internalizes these important structures and is increasingly able to rely on his own powers of judgment to discern the Lord's will in his life' (186). While the pilgrim does not become totally independent of these structures (i.e. books and guides), he has 'grown mature enough in his relationship with the Lord to determine for himself what needs to be done' (186). Expanding this into a more general observation, Billy claims that the 'purpose of spiritual direction is not to perpetuate the external trappings of the director/directee relationship for their own sake. Instead, it should allow the relationship to deepen and be transformed in such a way that the directee becomes less and less dependent on it for spiritual well-being' (187).

Mother Maria of Normanby is another monastic within the Roman Catholic Church who has written on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. In her work *The Jesus Prayer: The Meeting of East and West in the Prayer of the Heart*, she writes of having 'experienced the spontaneous integration of the Jesus Prayer into the Benedictine Life, and [. . .] come to consider that life as a natural framework for it' (Maria of Normanby 1972: 1). Her overall aim is to show that 'the Jesus Prayer has in essence been practised inside and outside the monastic life also in the Western Church; and to bring out this hidden convergence', proving that 'the Western monastic tradition is inwardly deeply akin, and forms an eminently adequate foundation for the practice of the Jesus Prayer' (1). To do this she focuses on the 'innermost core and direction in the life and teaching of St. Therese of the Child Jesus and of St. Catherine of Genoa' and views them in light of the Jesus Prayer (1–2). While making use of the Jesus Prayer in a Benedictine context, she insists, 'I have never practised the Jesus Prayer as a technique, nor as an end in itself; and I do not adhere to the explicit hesychast theology' (3). She also sees in hesychasm a potential ecumenical tool: 'Philokalia, the love of beauty, could become a major power towards consciousness of the fundamental unity of the Church' (8). Recognizing that 'the tradition of the Jesus Prayer has become in recent years, in a certain sense, the specific message of the Eastern Church to the Western world', she notes that 'the temptation is great to identify the Orthodox Church with the Jesus Prayer theology and practice, although this is but one stream of tradition amongst many' (1). Mother Maria again comments on the popularity of the practice

when she states, 'many, on hearing of it, eagerly seize it, because it promises them a fortress of silence within the heart, unassailable by outward peril and fear' (1).

Later, Mother Maria approaches the subject of the prayer's connection to non-Christian traditions of prayer. She explains that the hesychast Fathers 'in their zeal, [. . .] seized upon every means at their disposal, and it is here that practices from the Far East may have been adopted' (13). Still, she maintains that, 'fundamentally, the Jesus Prayer has nothing to do with Indian mysticism, whose aim it is by mental practices to gain spiritual power. Though similar practices of recollection have been used, they have a different purpose' (13). Her own theory about the similarities in practice is that 'the Fathers might have discovered these mental techniques by themselves; this is all the more possible, since hermit souls of all centuries, and in some degree of all religions, have a natural affinity of temperament' (13). The 'danger of this process of emptying the consciousness' that should result from the prayer is 'opening the gate to the sub-conscious, and from here dangerous outbursts are bound to occur, which only few can meet unharmed without help' (14). For her, this explains 'why there is so much talk of the devil in this tradition. It was the nearest explanation for assaults whose natural causality could not be explained' (14).

Mother Maria argues for the wider appeal and relevance of the Jesus Prayer outside of Orthodox ascetic tradition: 'The Jesus Prayer in itself is not bound to this form of asceticism, which is only a means of attaining pure mental prayer [. . .] If we find a different way of attaining to unceasing prayer, the relationship [of a *staretz* and neophyte] may lose its urgency' (15). Despite the existence of other approaches and doubts that some may have about the hesychastic technique of prayer, she sees a value in looking to those hesychasts 'who, in this way, did achieve that perfect selflessness [. . .] They show us the goal to which we too must aspire, although we may be called to its attainment by a different way' (15).

These several perspectives on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm from among Roman Catholic individuals are by no means exhaustive of all of the views from within the Catholic tradition. The same should be said of perspectives from within each of the different settings that will be described. The purpose of including them has not been to construct a single univocal view from within the group, but to give the reader an idea of some of the places where these practices have been adopted and what has been said about them from within these places. Following this, a look at the interaction between these views in conversation with each other will point towards a better understanding of what some of the primary interpretational issues are.

In the last half-century, the Anglicans and Episcopalians have also shown a growing interest in the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. Alongside a general increase in mutual exposure and interfaith activity between the Orthodox and Anglican Churches, many Anglicans have further explored Orthodox spirituality and theology, including the practices in question. The Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius was founded in 1928 to encourage dialogue between Eastern and Western Christianity, especially focusing on Orthodoxy and Anglicanism. The fellowship has long published the scholarly journal *Sobornost*, which has featured numerous articles that focus on the practices from Anglican perspectives. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, regularly contributes to this journal and has also written his own books on Orthodox theology and practice. We have already seen his early interest in the intersection between Thomas Merton and Russian theology in *Merton & Hesychasm*. As with the Roman Catholic Church, exact figures and statistics are not dealt with here, but I offer a few sources to indicate the existence and character of this influence.

Alexander Ryrie, who was a rector within the Scottish Episcopal Church and is now a priest at an Anglican contemplative community, has recently published a book entitled *Wonderful Exchange: An Exploration of Silent Prayer* (Ryrie 2003). Each chapter of the book ends with several quotes from Fathers of the Orthodox Church referring to prayer. The author states that, 'like many others in recent times, I have found myself especially drawn to the spiritual writers of the Orthodox tradition of the Christian East' (xii). Ryrie says we can learn much from Western authors on the subject of his book, 'but I believe that the Orthodox tradition offers insights into a way of silent prayer which can be especially meaningful today, even for those of us who do not belong to that tradition' (xii). At the outset of the book the author admits that 'this book is not an exposition of Orthodox spirituality, and it does not claim to represent an Orthodox approach to prayer. I have been deliberately selective, and have taken from these writings those ideas and insights which I have felt to be particularly useful, and have neglected others' (xii). The selectivity, or recognition of selectivity, is a noteworthy element here, and we will later study the importance of this concept.

Episcopal Bishop Arthur A. Vogel of West Missouri has written an entire book on the Jesus Prayer called *The Jesus Prayer for Today*, calling for his readers to make use of the practice (Vogel 1982). He poses a rhetorical question about proper prayer:

> To be 'right' the prayer must help us realize the presence of God in Jesus, keep before us who Jesus is, make us know ourselves only in Jesus, and prevent us from being satisfied with the prayer alone. Such a prayer

> would help us recognize the presence of Jesus as the Messiah, but does such a prayer exist? (53–4)

Answering his own question, he asserts, 'we believe there is such a prayer and that it is called the Jesus Prayer. There may, in fact, be many prayers which would serve the purpose of which we are speaking' (54). His reasons for choosing the Jesus Prayer are its antiquity and historical success, its biblical orientation and its requirement that one rely on the prayers of others in the past rather than one's own words (54–6). Vogel even recommends saying the prayer with one's breath but is sensitive to the feeling many may have at first that this is a mechanical approach, claiming that 'when saying the Prayer, the meaning of the words, not the words themselves, should be concentrated upon' (57–8). To quote the author at length on the subject of breathing exercises as an aid to prayer,

> There is nothing wrong with proceeding that way, and centuries of use back up such a method, but since prayer is an opening of oneself to God, fewer problems are presented to many people if they consciously open themselves to God and let his presence govern everything in them – including their breathing – rather than trying to work through their breathing to him. This association of breathing with prayer is habit-forming, however, and provides a ready occasion for prayer throughout the day. (58)

Instead, 'the important thing to stress is that the Prayer is being said to Jesus as the Christ [. . .] The Prayer is a way to practice the presence of God, but it is not a method for bringing God into our time' (58). In other words, the prayer is a way of recognizing that God is constantly present prior to our recognition of this presence. While he promotes the Jesus Prayer in many ways, Vogel also suggests that 'if the meaning of the Jesus Prayer, for example, is found in a person's life without using the precise words of the Prayer, it would be wrong to impose the Prayer as a rule which must be followed' (110). Vogel advises the reader to 'let the meaning of the words structure our lives', repeatedly insisting that 'a formal order of the words must never be substituted for the meaning they convey' (110) and that 'we cannot produce God's presence mechanically' (112). Towards the end of the book, Vogel indicates his acceptance of some form of the doctrine of *theosis* when he says 'to confront the God and Father of all through the Spirit in Jesus is our ultimate union with God' (114).

One surprising place where the practice of the Jesus Prayer has surfaced in recent years is in Evangelical groups and, especially, in the post-evangelical

movement of Emerging/Emergent Churches.[13] While the Emerging Churches have embraced a contemplative element that sometimes includes the use of the Jesus Prayer, other Evangelical groups are highly critical of this element. One can see within Evangelical groups a distinctly contemplative strain and a strongly anti-contemplative strain, which will be apparent in the present section.

One Evangelical author, Per-Olof Sjögren, wrote an entire book on the topic of the Jesus Prayer (Sjögren 1996). David Adams writes in the forward that 'this book enters the very depths of the Orthodox tradition of prayer and brings to it the riches of the author's Protestant Evangelical insights' (xi). Sjögren claims the prayer goes back, in one form or another, to Biblical times and he suggests that the brevity of the prayer may account for its unpopularity in the West until recently (2–3). The author reflects on this point:

> Perhaps westerners never knew of the prayer at an earlier date. Or perhaps they looked askance at it because of its simplicity, as being beneath the level of intellectual sophistication – and complication – to which their prayer forms were more often attuned. Or perhaps the Roman Catholic and Protestant devotional traditions were both too strongly entrenched to allow for the light oriental touch and spiritual depth of this simple prayer. (4)

By making a connection to the phrase 'hallowed be thy name' from the Lord's Prayer and pointing out that Pentecostalists also 'often call out the name of Jesus as a way of expressing a heart-centered relationship with him', he attempts to show that there is also a reverence for the name of Jesus in the west (5). Sjögren aims to show 'how close the western tradition of devotion is to the eastern on this point [. . .] how common has been their heritage of true prayer and worship down through the centuries' (5). He claims that 'the adoption and use of the Jesus Prayer is, for the westerner, no big step' and attempts 'to facilitate the taking of that step, and not just for the spiritually elite but for all people' (5). Sjögren praises the qualities of the Jesus Prayer that many other authors also emphasize: 'With its remarkable combination of brevity and fullness it is singularly suited to the busy people of our workaday world, for men and women and youth who have "no time to pray" ' (5).

Sjögren continues by analysing the constituent parts of the Jesus Prayer and emphasizing the need for knowing Biblical scripture and, thus, to whom the prayer is being said (13, 17). He also points out that 'the prayer

for mercy is not a prayer for certain gifts of grace from God, nor a prayer for forgiveness, for strength, for help in the changing fortunes of life, nor a prayer for any particular gift from God, but a cry to God himself' (8). In contrast to the Orthodox understanding of the divine essence and energies of God as the uncreated light, the author states that 'no one has seen God' (17).

Many people within the Emergent or Emerging Churches have sought to adopt concrete practices of spiritual discipline that they feel are lacking in the wider Evangelical world. In their book *Emerging Churches*, Gibbs and Bolger suggest that many of the practices have a contemplative orientation in order to counterbalance the 'hyperactivity' of other forms of evangelical prayer (Gibbs and Bolger 2006: 218–19). While some of these practices are created by the members themselves, others are taken from various existing traditions and include the *lectio divina*, labyrinths, Taizé, incense, Centering Prayer, chanting, Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and the Jesus Prayer (220, 222). The two authors suggest that one criterion for selecting these disciplines over others is that they strive to integrate body and spirit by incorporating both elements (220).

The shift to a discipline-oriented approach in the Emerging Churches (often expressed by phrases such as Ancient-Future and Ancient-Evangelical) and in the wider Protestant world was influenced by the 1985 work of Quaker author Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* (Foster 1978). Foster calls for a return to concrete practices such as prayer, meditation, fasting, confession and solitude and recommends using these to deepen and renew the inner lives of Western Christians. He also emphasizes that these spiritual disciplines are central to experiential Christianity and are meant to be used in everyday life and not just by those who are living a life of solitary prayer (1). In *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*, Robert E. Webber acknowledges the influence of Foster in recovering Orthodox spiritual literature such as the writings of St. Theodosius, St. Sergius and *The Way of the Pilgrim* (Webber 1999: 135). For this and the new interest in the art of meditation as fixed attention on Christ, he cites Foster's *Streams of Living Water* and his *Devotional Classics*. Webber predicts that 'the private inner spirituality of the Christian in a postmodern world will be driven by a return to the reading of the spiritual classics, to personal quiet meditation, and the spirituality of discipleship' (135). In another of Webber's books, *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches: Five Perspectives*, he claims that traditionalists are out of touch with culture and those in culture are out of touch with tradition (Webber 2007: 212).

Discussion on the Jesus Prayer within the Emerging Church is seen in several types of sources. Several of the most prominent authors within this movement show both a general knowledge and endorsement of the hesychastic tradition in their works (McLaren 2004: 151; Webber 1999: 135). In most of these written sources, the Jesus Prayer or hesychasm are mentioned briefly as an example of a spiritual discipline that encourages one to slow down and sense the presence of God. Others give more details on their own experience with the prayer, such as Sanctus1 and Jonny Baker, who have openly spoken of their personal and congregational use of the Jesus Prayer (Gibbs and Bolger 2006: 220, 226). Also, many blogs speak of personal experience of the Jesus Prayer, such as 'Living Water from an Ancient Well', which is described as 'an emergent ancient future misal, resource and notes of journey with a Celtic bent'.[14] On a three-part series on the Jesus Prayer, the author speaks of his experience:

> I haven't used it as a tool for contemplation. That has been reserved for Centering Prayer which will be discussed at another time. I have a job that doesn't particularly engage my mind and have found the Jesus prayer useful as a discipline when dealing with stress or a wandering mind, helping to cultivate an awareness of God's presence through out the day.

The author also claims that

> In a modern context this continuing repetition is regarded by some as a form of meditation. The prayer functioning as a kind of mantra. However, traditional users of the Jesus Prayer emphasize the invocation of the name of Jesus Christ and the object of the exercises being contemplation on the Triune God rather than simply an emptying the mind.

Orthodox prayer has been a topic at Emerging Church conferences such as 'The Call to an Ancient Evangelical Future', where Orthodox authors such as Frederica Mathews-Green have engaged in dialogue with authors and members of Emerging Churches.[15] On a blog that contains video clips and personal reflections on this conference, the blog author reflects on the comments of Frederica Mathews-Green:

> In classic Orthodox fashion, Frederica encouraged evangelicals – as they move into the past – to make the move that she has made, into Eastern Orthodoxy. Of course, she did this with a great deal of decorum and respect, but nonetheless, this is where she pointed folks. Only

> embracing 'part' of orthodoxy would be, in essence, yet another example of our consumerism-ridden mindset. Frederica gently urged us to consider going the entire distance, and embracing all of orthodoxy, not just part.

The author of the blog engages this challenge by asking, 'given that we all desire an "Ancient Evangelical Future", and yet also recognize that evangelicals making the entire jump into Orthodoxy – all at one time – is highly unlikely, what mediating strategies might we employ to move us forward into our past?'[16]

One popular book within this movement, *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian McLaren, mentions hesychasm and the writings of Kyriacos Markides in his chapter 'Why I am Mystical/Poetic' but does not go into any detail on the subject (McLaren 2004: 151). Similarly, one chapter of the book *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives* is devoted to an interview with Frederica Mathews-Green, a popular Orthodox author (Sweet 2003). Though the focus here is not primarily on the Jesus Prayer, the interaction shows a certain amount of recognition and willingness to dialogue with the Emerging Church movement. This may especially be so in the case of former Evangelicals who converted to the Orthodox Church and feel a special affinity with Evangelical Christians and feel a duty or call to educate them about Orthodox Christianity. Robert E. Webber discusses this briefly in *The Younger Evangelicals* (Webber 2002). He notes the existence of ecumenical dialogue between evangelical and Orthodox communities prominently led by Brad Nassif. Nassif was converted to Christianity by Billy Graham, received gradual training in theology and in 1990 founded and currently leads a group that promotes the study of the relationship between Orthodoxy and evangelicalism (Webber 2002).

As seen in a variety of texts, the Jesus Prayer has also played an increasingly significant role in Evangelical youth ministries and retreats. Mark Yanconelli's *Growing Souls: Experiments in Contemplative Youth Ministry* describes the Youth Ministry and Spirituality Project (YMSP) as 'an experimental venture created to explore the integration of contemplative prayer and awareness within youth ministry' (Yanconelli 2007:1). Yanconelli speaks of ministry as unceasing prayer, invoking *The Way of a Pilgrim* in the process (xi). He also uses the example of Franny and the Jesus Prayer from *Franny and Zooey* as an example of the intense seeking of young people for spiritual disciplines (40, 43, 49, 51). On the project's website, an article by Yanconelli originally printed in *Group* magazine in 1999 calls the Ancient-Future Youth Ministry 'a revolutionary approach to youth ministry that's so cutting-edge

it's . . . orthodox'.[17] He goes on to describe the use of the Jesus Prayer in youth ministries with young adults strumming guitars while singing and chanting the Jesus Prayer. Yanconelli asks and answers his own rhetorical question regarding this practice: 'Unorthodox? Actually, it's more like ultra-orthodox', and mentions mixing typical youth ministry activities with 'the dust-covered Christian practices of silence, solitude, and meditative prayer'. The author claims that 'pre-modern ministry' is 'not just a California thing' and has been tested in congregations around the country, including the states of Connecticut, Alabama, West Virginia and Indiana. This was accomplished by grants from the Lilly Endowment and, beginning in 1997, with the assistance of the San Francisco Theological Seminary and Youth Specialties, sixteen mainline congregations tested this approach with more to follow in the succeeding years.[18] One stated aim of a contemplative approach to ministry is to encourage children and young adults to make room in their lives for God, thus becoming closer to God by using the practices such as the Jesus Prayer to shift their attention towards His presence. Another important aim is to combat ministry burn-out and to reinvigorate existing youth ministry programs.[19]

Tony Jones goes into more depth on the subject of spiritual disciplines in *Soul Shaper: Exploring Spirituality and Contemplative Practices in Youth Ministry*, exploring several 'contemplative disciplines', including Centering Prayer and the Jesus Prayer (Jones 2003). Jones devotes his fifth chapter to the Jesus Prayer, beginning with a simple summary of *The Way of a Pilgrim* (60–1). He calls the prayer 'a foundation [and] the centerpiece of Eastern Christian spirituality since the fifth century' and refers to prayer ropes, the *Philokalia* and, implicitly, *theosis* (62–3). Jones describes asceticism and hesychasm, 'big Greek words', by reference to Origen and St. Gregory of Nyssa and several Fathers from the *Philokalia*, defending the purpose and efficacy of monastic life to his audience as a prolonged retreat (63). The purpose of the book is to present spiritual and contemplative practices as potential tools for youth ministry and, as such, the chapter ends with thoughts on the role the Jesus Prayer could play in this setting as an activity to teach in contemplative retreats (68). Jones recommends the Jesus Prayer as highly promising: 'While some of the contemplative practices, like Centering Prayer [. . .], are particularly difficult for youth, the Jesus Prayer can be accomplished. The recited prayer is concrete enough for the adolescent mind, and the addition of a prayer rope gives the practice a tangible quality that aids in success' (68). And, like Centering Prayer, the Jesus Prayer 'demands a mental discipline that is rarely required of adolescents' by helping to put all things besides God out of their mind

while praying (68). He recommends introducing youth to it in a retreat setting 'where students succeed on the first attempts' by getting through an entire prayer rope (68). Tony Jones also refers to his own use of the Jesus Prayer as something that 'has become very significant to me, maybe more than any other practice I've investigated, and it's an important part of my Rule of Life' (68). The author details his struggle with the Jesus Prayer in the following journal entry: 'Everything in my American bloodstream [. . .] is repelled by the disciples. Take for instance the Jesus Prayer – how boring! But I find such comfort in the routine, the simplicity. No more searching for how to guide my prayer. No more wondering what form to pray in' (66).

Other Evangelicals see this contemplative emphasis as a disturbing trend within Evangelicalism. Apprising Ministries, an opponent of this contemplative emphasis, criticizes the growing popularity of contemplative prayer at length:

> In my work for Christ here at Apprising Ministries you will have heard me talk much lately about the new spirituality that has slithered its way into new evangelicalism. This neo-pagan Gnostic spirituality is most pointedly on display in the misguided mysticism of the Emergent Church. Yes, I am fully aware that people involved in this highly schismatic movement prefer to be known as the Emerging Church, but no longer emerging this cultic group has now fully emerged from the shadows on the outskirts of the evangelical camp. [. . .] The most dangerous aspect of the new spirituality is this idea propounded by the EC of spiritual disciplines/practices which they insist must be performed in order to more fully 'experience' God.[20]

The site speaks of the 'heretical practices culled from so-called "Christian" mystics that they in turn borrowed from Eastern religions and then passed off as consistent with the historic orthodox Christian faith'. The author sees the type of meditation spoken of by the Evangelical church today as being 'virtually identical' to practices from Zen Buddhism and Transcendental Meditation and says that 'while this makes some Christians nervous, others revel in the fact that God is revealed in all truth, no matter the religion of origin'. The author believes Richard Foster is right when he said meditation 'opens the door':

> It is what inevitably comes through that open door which is the concern of this particular work. As we progress with this you will come to

understand the dangerous spiritual reality about what Foster tells us concerning the eventual effect that arrived at through the meditation 'of this kind [which] transforms the inner personality'.

This article, as well as several others, criticizes those in the Emerging Church such as Tony Jones and those who have influenced him, such as Richard Foster.[21] Foster is accused of dabbling in non-Christian practices, even though they note that Foster attempts to distance Christian meditation from other types by claiming 'there are those who assume it [Christian meditation] is synonymous with the concept of meditation centred in Eastern religions. In reality, the two ideas stand worlds apart. Eastern meditation is an attempt to empty the mind; Christian meditation is an attempt to fill the mind' (Foster 1978: 20). Instead, the article claims, 'Centering/Contemplative Prayer, or so-called Christian meditation, is really nothing more than transcendental meditation lightly sprayed with Christian terminology'. Thomas Merton emerges as the grandfather of this recent trend of Christian meditation as Foster frequently quotes and cites Merton as an important influence.

Another example of a group that has put the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm to use is the so-called Perennialist or Traditionalist school. The primary proponents of this school of thought include René Guénon, Ananda Coomaraswami, Julius Evola and Frijthof Schuon, among others. There are also 'soft' Perennialists, or those who have tendencies towards the idea that there is an essential unity of religious traditions in the realm of metaphysics or mysticism but are not explicit members of the Perennialist school. Many can be included in this category, including well-known scholars, such as Mircea Eliade, Huston Smith and Carl Gustav Jung. For the most part, Orthodox Christianity does not figure as prominently as Sufism and Hinduism in the writings of the first wave 'core' Perennialists, such as Guénon, but in some later authors it has become a more central concern.

Mark Sedgwick's *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* is one of the few studies of Traditionalism or Perennialism as a movement (Sedgwick 2004). In this movement, which could best be thought of as a diffuse school of thought, individuals identify themselves with one particular tradition but claim that all genuine traditions are univocally true when it comes to their esoteric or transcendental dimension, rather than their exoteric and outward religious aspect. Common to this worldview is the notion that, despite this fundamental inner unity, one must live in a single tradition and make use

of its countless dimensions, which function together as an indivisible whole aimed at direct knowledge of the divine.

In Sedgwick's discussion of Fr. Seraphim (Eugene) Rose, he speaks of the initial and lasting influence of Traditionalist thought on Fr. Seraphim. Regarding Rose's opinion of popular scholar, speaker and spokesman Alan Watts, 'the "Buddhism" he espoused as a remedy for the spiritual malaise of the West was thus an unauthentic, synthesized expression of that tradition, streamlined to cater to the modern mentality of self-worship' (208). Rose thought Guénon and Schuon's understanding of Eastern traditions was more authentic, not simply 'digestible for westerners', (208) and, initially, he embraced this view and attempted to do for Taoism what Guénon did for Hinduism (209). After becoming interested in Orthodox Christianity through Schuon, Rose began to visit Russian Orthodox churches in San Francisco and soon had an epiphany about the certainty of Christ's divinity (209). Later, he came to admit that 'each tradition possesses truth, beyond doubt, but in varying measures', claiming 'the "equality" and "transcendent unity" of religions is a notion from the modernist "simplistic" mentality' (209). Even after the writings of the Traditionalists, for Rose, the troubling state of modernity had not appeared to change, eventually leading him to the realization that 'Christ requires us not to "understand", but to suffer, die, and arise to Life in Him' (Christensen 1993: 125–6).

Realizing the influence Traditionalism had in his own path to conversion into the Orthodox Church,

> Rose did not, however, reject Traditionalism entirely. It remained part of his personal philosophy in the 1970s, when he replied to a Traditionalist who had written to him: 'I only pray that you will take what is good from him [Guénon] and not let his limitations chain you'. (Christensen 1993: 651)

Christensen claims that 'what Rose kept for himself from Traditionalism was a devotion to "traditional" esoteric practice as well as firm opposition to the modern world and to "counterinitiation", [. . .] attacking the new religious movements of the time' (637–44). Sedgwick calls Rose 'the classic example of how Traditionalism became for many a "stepping-stone" – not a destination in itself in the way that it was for previous Traditionalists' (Sedgwick 2004: 209). The author adds that, in many cases, it is difficult to track the influence of Traditionalism on the thought of those who later moved on to embrace a particular tradition without emphasizing the influence of *philosophia perennis* (210). This is due both to the unorganized

nature of the movement and to the desire of some converts to cover their tracks, since Traditionalist thought is often not accepted as orthodox teaching and viewed suspiciously by religious authorities (210, 271).

Sedgwick mentions several other Traditionalists who identified with the Orthodox Church, such as the young Swiss Jean-Francois Mayer in the mid-1970s and Alexander Dugin, who is currently politically active in Russia (209–10, 221). Dugin attempts to correct Guénon's dismissal or neglect of the Orthodox tradition, arguing 'the Christianity that Guénon rejected was Western Catholicism. Guénon was right in rejecting Catholicism but wrong in rejecting Eastern Orthodoxy, of which he knew little' (225–6). Dugin claims that 'Orthodoxy, unlike Catholicism, had never lost its initiatic validity and so remained a valid tradition to which a Traditionalist might turn' (225–6). Dugin also attempts to translate much of the Traditionalist philosophy into Orthodox terms (226). Even though 'Schuon's universalism claimed to encompass Christianity, as it did all religions [. . .] Traditionalism has not usually claimed to be compatible with Christianity' (271). As the exception, 'Dugin's Traditionalism led not to Sufism as the esoteric practice of Islam, but to Russian Orthodoxy as both an esoteric and an exoteric practice' (226).

In her article 'Aleksandr Dugin: a Russian version of the European radical right?' Marlene Laruelle paraphrases Dugin's argument that Guénon's description of Christianity becoming exoteric after the Ecumenical Councils refers only to the Western confessions of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, the East having 'retained its initiatic character and esoteric foundations to this day' (Laruelle 2006: 10). In regards to the Traditionalist ideas that inspired him, the author says 'he hopes to "Russify" the doctrines that inspire him, and to adapt them to what he calls the traditional concepts of the Russian world' (10). To accomplish this, 'Dugin links an esoteric account of the world to Orthodoxy, which he sees as having preserved an initiatic character, a ritualism where each gesture has a symbolic meaning' (11). In Laruelle's description of Dugin's understanding of new religious movements, she says that

> Dugin fully agrees with the Traditionalist criticism of spiritualism. Guénon already considered spiritualism to be a 'counter-initiation', a reconstruction of pseudo-traditions actually born of modernity, which must be condemned for wanting to usurp the real Tradition. For Dugin too, theosophism, cosmism and the New Age religions are a spiritualist version of post-industrial modernity and a veiled cult of technology.

> He condemns their populism and lack of coherent spiritual conceptions, whereas he sees Traditionalism as intended for a restricted elite, which is alone able to understand its requirements. (11)

Another author influenced by Traditionalism and Orthodox Christianity not given much attention by Sedgwick is Phillip Sherrard. With the help of co-Traditionalists Kathleen Raine, Keith Critchlow and Brian Keegle, and with the sponsorship and aid of Prince Charles, Duke of Edinburgh, Sherrard established and ran the Temenos Academy and the journal *Temenos: A Review of the Arts of the Imagination*, both inspired by the Traditionalist worldview (Sedgwick 2004: 214). In her short biography on Sherrard, close friend and fellow poet Kathleen Raine admits that Sherrard was the first to introduce her to the idea of a 'universal and unanimous wisdom underlying all sacred traditions which have nourished and sustained civilization' (Raine 1996: 5, 13). In spite of her acceptance of this opinion, after half a lifetime of correspondence, Sherrard never convinced Raine of the truth of 'the traditionalist belief that we must choose and commit ourselves to one religion, or [. . .] relinquishing my faith in the authority within' (15). She points out the post-war context of many of the Traditionalist authors, saying that in post-war London 'we knew the difference between the authentic and the commercial' (5). Sherrard helped translate the only English translation of the *Philokalia*, along with Metropolitan Kallistos Ware and Gerald E. H. Palmer, and Raine claims that even while working on the *Philokalia*, 'he continued to participate in the work of the traditionalist school of René Guénon and A. K. Coomaraswamy' (13). Raine makes an interesting point that 'among members of this group Philip was alone in embracing Orthodox Christianity' (14). She says that, at the time of her writing the biography, the scope of his wide correspondence was unknown (19).

In *The Transcendental Unity of Religions*, prominent perennialist Frithjof Schuon often mentions topics such as hesychasm, the hesychastic vision of the divine uncreated light, the essence/energy distinction, Mount Athos, *The Way of a Pilgrim*, the prayer of Jesus, and *hesychia* or inner silence (Schuon 1953: 66, 157, 170–2, 176–83). Schuon makes several noteworthy points about these topics. He refers to hesychasm as the most pure, unadulterated form inherited from 'primitive Christian spirituality' and Christian initiation, noting its survival 'among certain monks of Hesychast lineage on Mount Athos or among other spiritual descendents of the same family' until modern times (170). Later, Schuon again calls hesychasm 'the most

direct and untouched branch of Christian initiation' and specifies that this is due to its esoteric nature, especially seen in its apophatic theology and essence/energy distinction (176–7). In a footnote, Schuon further develops this point: 'Hesychasm, which is too often looked upon as a philosophico-mystical "curiosity" of purely historical interest, has its roots in Christianity as such, and [. . .] it is not merely a rather special development of Christian spirituality, but its purest and deepest expression' (176–7f.). For Schuon, hesychasm can be clearly distinguished 'from the methods of ordinary religious piety, linking it to the methods used in *Yoga* and Sufism and all other analogous ways' (178). He claims 'the Hesychast doctrine is in perfect accord with the teaching of every other initiatory tradition' when it comes to its conception of the heart as the spiritual centre of the person (180).

The Jesus Prayer is described as 'in principle reserved for an elite, thus proving its extra-religious character' as 'the means of perfecting the natural participation of the human microcosm in the divine Metacosm, that is to say the transmutation of this participation into supernatural participation and finally into union and identity' (180). According to Schuon,

> It is only by means of this 'prayer' that the creature can be really united with his Creator; the goal of this 'prayer' is consequently the 'supreme' spiritual state, in which man becomes detached from everything pertaining to the creature and, being directly united with the Divinity, is illuminated by the Divine Light. This supreme state is the 'Holy Silence' (*hesychia*). (180)

Schuon says 'the "prayer of Jesus", like every other initiatory rite, but unlike religious rites [. . .], is strictly methodical: that is to say it is subject to technical ordinances' such as control of breathing which Schuon relates to the yogic practice of *pranayama* (181). Schuon goes on to acknowledge that the virtues are the 'conditio sine qua non' for the efficacy of 'spiritual prayer' (181).

The silence of hesychasm is considered identical to Hindu and Buddhist *nirvana* and Sufic *fana* (181f.) and the invocation of the name of Jesus is seen as an example of the same 'fundamental and truly universal significance of the invocation of the Divine Name' (182) that is behind the practice of Islamic *dhikr* and Buddhist *nembutsu* (182–3f.). Similarly, the word *work* is used to refer to the invocation of the prayer of Jesus, while for Sufi dervishes, the invocation is also called *shoghl*, or *occupation* (182–3f.). In his introduction to *The Essential Frithjof Schuon*, Seyyed Hossein Nasr writes

of the references to hesychasm and Orthodox Christian spirituality in Schuon's writings:

> There are also many pages devoted by Schuon to Orthodox theology and spirituality, especially works such as the *Philokalia* concerned with quintessential prayer. There is something of the 'Oriental' doctrine of the saving grace of beauty, of the mystery of icons, of the Hesychast prayer of the heart, of the apophatic theology of a St. Gregory of Palamas and of the luminous skies above Mt. Athos in the writings of Schuon. (1991: 20)

Nasr also notes that 'many have, in fact, been led to the discovery of Orthodoxy through his works' (20).

Traditionalist Buddhist Marco Pallis' article 'Discovering the Interior Life'[22] considers the plausibility of adapting various spiritual practices in the West (1968). He believes elaborate practices such as tantric meditation 'would not easily be realizable in a Western framework, save by exception' (89–90). For Pallis,

> in a time of growing alienation and disbelief apparatus of a very complex kind hardly fits the need, which calls for a discipline that is at once 'central', that is to say expressive of the most central truths of the tradition, and at the same time extremely concise as to the instruments it sets in motion, thus allowing of their methodic exercise under all kinds of circumstances, be it even the most unfavourable. (90)

With this consideration, Pallis comes to the conclusion that the use of the Jesus Prayer would seem to best fit this criteria:

> All the great traditions are agreed in saying that this way of concentrating attention and pervading a person's whole being with continual reminders of God is a spiritual means particularly suited to the needs of the Dark Age, when religion is at a low ebb and the forces of godless subversion seem to be a mounting tide. (90)

Commenting on the widespread presence of the invocation of the divine name in many traditions, Pallis contends 'it could scarcely be otherwise, since such a way corresponds to a basic human need, outside all questions of religious form' (91). He considers hesychasm a 'form of Christian *yoga*' (91) that 'is accessible and appropriate to every baptised person as

such' (92). 'Seeing that the Jesus Prayer belongs historically to Eastern Christianity', he says 'it may be asked by some whether its transplantation to the West at this late hour would be entirely appropriate, using it of course in its Latin translation of *Domine Jesu Christe Fili Dei miserere nobis* and whether the rosary could fill the same function' (92). Pallis gives no clear answer to this question. He notes that 'a number of Catholics known to the writer have long been using the Jesus Prayer and there is no reason why others should not follow their example, if so minded' (92–3). Pallis notes that in the use of the divine name, the name begins as the object of invocation but eventually becomes the subject of invocation when the state of 'spontaneous perpetual prayer' is reached and the subject/object distinction collapses (93). Pallis writes:

> As in the case of those following one of the Indian forms of *yoga*, an intending Hesychast disciple is warned of dangers that might arise from an unguided use of a spiritual instrument of such great inherent potency, for instance through the development of unusual psychic powers whereby attention might be diverted from 'the one needful thing' to the ego of the person himself. (93)

In his book *The Way and the Mountain*, Pallis also mentions the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm as exemplified in *The Way of a Pilgrim* as 'strictly analogous, as regards its principles and even its details, to what is to be found in the lands further East, a case of spiritual coincidence, not of borrowing in either direction' (Pallis 1991: 121).

The well-known scholar of religion, Huston Smith, wrote an article entitled 'The Jesus Prayer' for *The Christian Century* in 1973 with the subtitle: 'In these curious times, when magic and divination are being practiced on every major campus in our land, is it possible that the Jesus Prayer might come into its own?' (Smith 1973: 363). Smith asks: 'Why have we become such a fertile field for alien faiths [of the East]? Partly because our own religions did not deter us from what we have done in southeast Asia, but also, I suspect, because Judaism and Christianity have not been very explicit about method' (364). He states his belief that

> What people today seem to want is not morals and belief, not even new morals and a new belief. They want a practical discipline that will transform them. They seek an experience that will enable them to lead their lives on a different basis, from a new center. They want a new consciousness and a method for obtaining it; an enlargement of awareness

> to the point that God is encountered not as a postulate but as an experienced fact. (363–4)

Since 'to many Christians the whole idea of an interior transformation deliberately undertaken seems faintly suspect' most Christians seem 'to have been of the opinion that illumination, if it comes at all, comes as a supernatural grace, a gift; there is little, if anything, we can validly do to bring it about in ourselves' (364). Smith claims to 'know of no Asian tradition that would have given that answer' (364). In contrast, 'it is the unanimous testament of Hindu, Buddhist and Sufi alike that there are positive steps proper to man. But then there are such testaments in Christendom too, minority reports though they be' (364). Smith claims one such Christian testament is the Jesus Prayer. He goes on to speak of the monks of Mount Athos, *kenosis*, hesychasm, the *Philokalia* and the story of the Russian pilgrim, comparing the Pilgrim's experiential solving of the incessant prayer paradox to a *koan* (364–5). Smith calls the Jesus Prayer 'a Western mantra if I ever heard one', and describes it as 'the uninterrupted calling upon the name of Jesus with the lips, in the spirit, and in the heart, while forming a picture of his presence and imploring his grace during every occupation' (365).

A collection devoted entirely to comparing 'Sufism and the Christian East' has been published by World Wisdom, a publishing company 'dedicated to the exposition of the timeless Truth underlying the diverse traditions' (Cutsinger 2002: i). This volume, *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East*, was compiled from the contributions of nearly a dozen scholars at a conference of the same name at the University of South Carolina in 2001. Among the several articles contained in the book that relate to the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm is one entitled 'Hesychia: an Orthodox opening to esoteric ecumenism' by James S. Cutsinger. The title points to what Dr. Cutsinger calls in his foreword to the book 'a form of interfaith dialogue which, while fully respecting the integrity of traditional dogmas and rites, "calls into play the wisdom which can discern the one sole Truth under the veil of different forms" '(ix). Cutsinger comments on the typical interfaith gathering as spawning dialogue that is 'confined to the outward or exoteric level of doctrines and practices, and at this level, given the considerable differences among the teachings of the world's religions, contradiction or compromise often appear as the only alternatives' (vii). Those 'who limit their approach to the dogmatic letter of their religions will find their perspectives mutually exclusive, and their "dialogue" [. . .] will be reduced to two parallel monologues' (vii). Since each tradition

is not simply a system of exoteric beliefs but has 'a spiritual heart, in which the deeper meaning of those beliefs and practices comes alive, [. . .] the spiritual pilgrim may discover, beyond the level of contradictory forms, an inner commonality with those who follow other paths' (vii). Cutsinger claims that 'one finds their [Christians and Muslims] mystical traditions, especially in the Christian East and in Sufism, have for centuries shared many of the same spiritual methods and goals' and that masters from one of these traditions have occasionally taken seekers from the other tradition for instruction (viii). Still, the author recognizes 'historically that most masters in the Christian East and in Sufi Islam would nonetheless stop short of embracing so explicitly universalist a point of view, insisting instead on the superiority of their own religions' (viii). Cutsinger admits that 'this same insistence was by no means absent from our conference', especially with several of the Christian contributors, adding that 'the conference was therefore not without its controversial moments' (viii). The interaction between these different views as they relate to the Jesus Prayer will be discussed in the next chapter.

The group often called the Fourth Way, which was initially led by G. I. Gurdjieff and P. D. Ouspensky, also has an interesting place for the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm in its system of thought. Gurdjieff was notoriously evasive about the sources for his writings and spiritual instructions and, consequently, he does not often speak directly about these practices as an influence. Since Ouspensky's writings are the more systematic in relation to Gurdjieff's, the practices appear more in these writings. In one text, *Tertium Organum: A Key to the Enigmas of the World*, Ouspensky speaks of the *Philokalia* and quotes from it based on selections from a book entitled *Superconsciousness and the Paths to its Attainment* by M. V. Lodizhensky who claims to have introduced an enthusiastic Tolstoy to the *Philokalia* (Ouspensky 1922: 285–8, 286–7f.). In the chapter 'What is Yoga?' from his book *A New Model of the Universe*, Ouspensky criticizes spiritual exercises within Catholicism, such as those of Ignatius of Loyola, as 'nothing but manuals for creating hallucinations of a definite and stereotyped character', insisting, rather, that 'the most interesting work on religious practice are to be found in the literature of the Eastern Orthodox church' (Ouspensky 1971: 235). He describes the *Philokalia* as containing 'descriptions of mystical experiences, statutes and regulations of monastic life, rules of prayer and contemplation, and descriptions of methods very near methods of Hatha-Yoga (adopted in Bhakti-Yoga)' (235). Regarding *The Way of a Pilgrim*, 'an acquaintance with this small book gives an exact idea of the character and the spirit of Bhakti-Yoga' (235). Ouspensky claims that

'the methods of the *Dobrotolubiye* [*Philokalia*] have not vanished from real life' and supports this by referring to a short description of Mount Athos in 1928 (236). Ouspensky regards the term Bhakti-Yoga as a term that

> can be applied to every religion (of course to a real religion, not to an invented one); this means that Bhakti-Yoga includes all religions and recognizes no differences between them. Moreover, Bhakti-Yoga, as well as all the other Yogas, does not require a final abandonment of life, but only temporary withdrawal from life for the attainment of a definite aim. When the aim is attained, the Yoga becomes unnecessary. [. . .] Yoga is a more active way. Monastic life is a more passive way. (238)

Boris Mouravieff was another exponent of the Gurdjieff and Ouspensky's Work, as they called their teachings and practices. His *Gnosis* trilogy was a presentation of 'the complete system of which only "fragments" had been previously published in Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous*', and is distinctive for its detailed elaboration of the Work as esoteric Orthodox Christianity (Mouravieff 1990: back cover). In his foreword, Mouravieff points out that in *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*, Ouspensky reveals the basis of Gurdjieff's teaching as being esoteric Christianity (xvii). Mouravieff counters that this teaching is not really unknown: 'the Christian Esoteric Tradition has always remained alive within certain monasteries in Greece, Russia, and elsewhere, and if it is true that this knowledge was hermetically hidden, yet its existence was known and access to it was never forbidden to those seriously interested in these questions' (xvii).

The author has no doubt that the fragments originated 'from the revelations issued by that *Great esoteric Brotherhood* to which the Apostle St. Paul alluded in his Epistle to the Romans' (xvii). The reason for the fragmentary nature of Gurdjieff's work is that, until recently, the tradition was only oral and not written and 'only a study of the complete tradition can give access to the Revelation' (xvii). The author writes of his close relationship to Ouspensky and of his recommendation to Ouspensky not to immediately publish *Fragments* due to its incomplete nature, a request Ouspensky honoured until twenty years later. The *Gnosis* trilogy is said to be a complete form of *Fragments* and the errors in *Fragments* show that it was not fully inspired and not written under the orders or control of the 'Great esoteric Brotherhood' (xviii). Mouravieff claims his own study 'is directly drawn from the Eastern Orthodox Tradition: the sacred texts, the commentaries written around these texts, and especially from the *Philokalia* which is, above all, the same teaching and discipline, transmitted by fully authorized

individuals' (xviii). The author says that a fragmentary presentation of the way towards the second Birth, which is 'the object and goal of esoteric work', is dangerous and a more complete treatment is necessary (xviii).

He notes that, despite an increase of interest in esoteric studies in the first half of the twentieth century, 'many Europeans who feel drawn to these researches turn their eyes towards the non-Christian Traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism and others' (xx). Mouravieff reveals his Perennialist understanding of Orthodox Christian esotericism:

> The Tradition is One, and whoever delves deeply into these studies will not fail to be struck by this essential unity. Yet to those who desire to go beyond pure speculation, the problem appears in a different light. This unique Tradition has been and still is now being presented in multiple forms, each meticulously adapted to the mentality and spirit of the human group to which its Word is addressed, and to the mission with which this group has been charged. For the Christian world, the easiest way; the least difficult way to reach the goal, is to follow the esoteric Doctrine which forms the basis of the Christian Tradition. [. . .] It is incomparably easier for him to begin his studies from this environment, rather than to adapt to the spirit of an environment different from his own. Transplantation is not without danger, and generally gives hybrid products. [. . .] all the great religions which have issued from the one Tradition are messages of truth [. . .] yet each of them addresses itself only to a part of humanity (xx).

He also shows an exclusivist understanding of esotericism in this setting:

> Most of the writings in the *Philokalia* were intended for people who had already acquired a certain esoteric culture. One can say the same for certain aspects and texts of the Canon, including the Gospels. It must also be noted that, being addressed to all, these texts cannot take account for the abilities of each person. (xxi)

At the same time, Mouravieff comments on the need for this tradition to be spread outside of monasteries, since, 'if hermetism has provided a safeguard for nearly twenty centuries, it must now be said that circumstances have now changed' and now 'the possibility will exist of initiation into this divine Wisdom, *mysterious and hidden*' (xxi).

Robin Amis, the translator and publisher of Mouravieff's trilogy, has also published a book on the inner tradition of Orthodox Christianity in light of

the work of Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Mouravieff (Amis 1995). In *A Different Christianity: Early Christian Esotericism and Modern Thought*, Amis claims Gurdjieff hinted, and Ouspensky openly stated, that the Fourth Way was 'a reemergence of a lost ancient tradition or traditions of inner truth several times described as esoteric Christianity' (xv, 36). According to Amis, 'the Christian inner tradition [. . .] has been restricted to a few hundred monks, most of them in Eastern Christendom' (8). Robin Amis presents the mystical path of Orthodoxy as an inner tradition of Christianity that has been less accessible through the centuries when compared to the inner traditions of other religions (xiv). Whereas he sees hesychasm as a traditionally monastic path, Amis sees a need to bring the practices out of the monasteries and into the lives of ordinary non-monastics.

His overall aim in writing the book is 'to rediscover that tradition of consciousness and make it generally known. [. . .] it applies even to those who, unable to follow the way of the monk, walk the esoteric path by methods generally unknown to the monks' (8). Stated in another way, Amis endeavours to 'restore some of the lost meanings' or 'rediscover the inner sense' of texts to have a proper understanding of them (10). The texts themselves have recently been made available by travel and scholarship, says Amis, but 'new methods of research' are needed to restore the lost meanings of words in the texts (19). Towards the end of his book, Amis states one of its purposes as being to explore

> what elements in early texts or monastic practice would be needed to restore something like the original form of this tradition, and what there was in the psychology of the Fourth Way forms not otherwise available to the West, which might serve as essential replacements for knowledge that has been lost. (351–2)

The author appears to share many convictions with Perennialism such as the claim that 'all the major religions of the world possess a complete tradition of inner knowledge (or a version of the one tradition), although it has only reached a small percentage of the most able individuals within that faith' (xiii). He complains that Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam are trying to make their inner traditions better known while Western churches either claim their inner tradition does not exist or that it is only relevant for clergy (xiii–xiv). Amis laments that 'this has forced countless thousands to turn to Eastern faiths for no other reason than because their inner teachings are more accessible than our own' (xiv). According to Amis, much of the Christian inner tradition, which is more like a discipline than a system,

has been lost, mislaid or known by only a few, resulting in a minimal influence on Western civilization (xiii, xiv). Amis defends the Christian esoteric tradition as a true esoteric tradition and equal to the inner traditions of the East (13). While similarities between this ancient Christian path and yoga are important, the 'fundamental technique is very different from Yoga, being based on the gospel idea that what is impossible to man is possible to God' (20). Amis further distinguishes between the traditions: 'The inner tradition is a Christian equivalent of Zen or Raja Yoga, both of which contain extensive psychological teachings, but the technicalities of this Christian equivalent, known in the gospel as the Way, have never been known to the West' (19). Another important dissimilarity for Amis is that, unlike other esoteric traditions, 'in the Christian esoteric tradition, salvation from our state depends primarily on the mercy of God' (44). He also refers to the Jesus Prayer as 'the exact Christian equivalent of the Indian *dhyana* meditation, although technically different in certain important ways' (61–2). Amis says that the Jesus Prayer cannot be called a method because this would neglect the personal and emotional encounter that is involved (255).

The author points to the need to rediscover the roots of western civilization in the inner tradition of Christianity: 'Many people who are aware of the need for them [tradition's tools of understanding] will find both personal solutions and general answers not in the religions of other civilizations, where so many have already searched without success, but in the roots of our own world' (xvii). Thus, he suggests 'that the most viable solution may not be to invent or reinvent a new religion, not to explore the religions of other civilizations and import them to our shores as seeds of future division, but to take a look at some other aspects of Christianity that are little known today' (xvii). These aspects are said to lie in 'inaccessible corners [and] can be rediscovered and restored to use for modern man, as part of a spiritual awakening' (xvii). Recently, 'the experiences obtained in meditation have reawakened interest in Christian methods of inner prayer, in the Jesus Prayer or prayer of the heart, and in the centering prayer introduced by Father Thomas Keating', which are all ways of helping to 'awaken dormant possibilities within our own Christian civilization' and bringing 'an evolutionary change in direction [. . .] toward the spiritual dimension of life' (61–2).

The therapeutic view of Christianity, which is said to survive 'in Greece today in the mountain fastnesses where hermits hide', is 'reemerging as a growing movement that seeks to distinguish between inner and outer interpretations of Christian doctrine, and refers to the outer form as "moralistic" or sometimes "legalistic" ' (2–3). All traditions are said to have this spiritual

therapeutic aspect, and some display it more openly than others (9). For evidence of the reemergence of this approach within Orthodoxy, Amis directs the reader to the writings of Bishop Hierotheos Vlachos (3). The distinction between esoteric and exoteric should be familiar from the writings of Traditionalists mentioned in the last section and is seen here as a restatement of Patristic terms (66). The therapeutic view is described as suppressed by the general tendency to externalize faith (9). Since the time of Clement, the 'outer church' was increasingly closed to inner tradition and after becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire, remnants of the inner tradition of Christianity went into seclusion, mostly in monasteries (28). Amis also notes the experimental and experiential nature of the inner tradition when Christianity is seen esoterically, using phrases such as 'self-knowledge', 'looking within', 'inner potential' and 'higher states' (41–2, 47).

The esoteric tradition of Christianity is largely an 'unwritten tradition, and it has been found – not surprisingly – that documentary evidence of an unwritten tradition is not always available' but Amis points to anthropology's positing of unwritten cultures to support his claim that a lack of written evidence of a tradition does not necessarily entail a lack of the tradition's existence (3). Amis describes 'the reuniting of the thinking faculty to the heart' as 'the great secret of Inner Christianity, only it is not really a secret so much as something unnoticed because of our lack of understanding' (20). Amis relates this tradition to Gurdjieff's principle of the 'sly man's pill', which signifies that the sly man, instead of working physically for sixteen hours like the *fakir*, will simply take a pill each day, the pill being 'one of a selection of methods [. . .] referred to as noetic ascesis' (23). This 'ancient knowledge' was kept intact in forms such as monasticism, but other forms went fully underground, only to emerge later, sometimes without the consent of the Orthodox Church (31). The form implied here would be the way uncovered by Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Mouravieff. Though Gurdjieff is said to have claimed the esoteric Christian roots of his practice and encouraged his followers to seek out these roots, he never revealed his exact sources and his followers never took his advice, choosing instead to seek Sufi masters (356 n.).

The author appears to approach *A Different Christianity* with the intention of giving a more coherent account of the inner Christianity of hesychasm, consolidating the many 'fragmentary' insights of the *Philokalia* that revolve around the concept of *metanoia* or repentance (7). Amis claims that it is impossible for most of the world to live as the ascetics who have guarded this tradition, and there is the general impression that an esoteric tradition is being explicitly presented in a more systematic form than before,

bringing it out of the shadows to a place where it can most impact a general non-monastic audience (29). While laypeople need additional knowledge to match the obedience practised by monks, even the monastic guardians from Egypt and Mount Athos are not a perfect source for the inner tradition since, according to Amis, their inner traditions have gone through periods of decline and renewal over the centuries (36, 57). Amis expresses gratitude to the monks and abbots of the Athonite monasteries Simonopetra and Grigoriou for advice he has received on his many visits there. He specifically mentions a message he was given from an Athonite monk to deliver to the Western world in a 1983 visit, urging the West to move beyond intellectualism and to knowledge and truth of the heart as well (1, 43).

Amis stresses the fact that the true, inner Christianity of the early Church Fathers was probably only reached and understood by few and has not been generally accessible in complete form for two thousand years (31). Summarizing the implications of this, Amis says, 'what all this means is that, now becoming available to the ordinary layperson for the first time is perhaps the greatest religious psychology in the world, much of it more than fifteen hundred years old but unsurpassed even today' (35). He notes the claim made by Mouravieff that the time of monasticism is over since people have so many ties to the world and goes on to speak about a 'psychological method' as opposed to a 'classical monastic model' that is more suited to modern humans (264, 344). In the author's view, Ouspensky and Gurdjieff taught this 'highly simplified psychological form, developed by G. I. Gurdjieff, of [. . .] one stream of traditional Orthodox thought' while borrowing from other traditions (346). According to Amis, Gurdjieff and Ouspensky

> began to define something that my [Amis'] investigations have proved fairly conclusively was based on or identical to – at least in large part – the forgotten psychological teachings of the early church. These teachings form part of the tradition I referred to earlier in the book, a means of healing human beings and restoring them to psychic and spiritual health. (346)

While Amis believes Ouspensky and Gurdjieff's teachings produced remarkable results in some cases, the results 'did not equal those produced by the early church' and both men admitted this failure later in life (347). Amis claims that

> [Gurdjieff's] novel way of explaining things, because of his flamboyant and apparently egotistical style of teaching [. . .] made it too easy to judge

> him a charlatan [. . .] and because he disguised or left out certain Christian dogmas whose origin, if admitted, would have been unacceptable to his students, nearly every committed Christian has ignored him. (347)

Another link to the Fourth Way and hesychasm is that 'the *Philokalia* [. . .] was translated into English as a direct result of Ouspensky's friendly contact with a hermit on Mount Athos, Father Nikon' (347).[23] Amis explains that

> After Ouspensky's death, certain of his students made contact with that hermit, and this contact with the mainstream had considerable effects on Western spirituality, since it was this that led directly to Gerald Palmer's translation into English of parts of the *Philokalia*. [. . .] The idea came from Father Nikon in conversation with Palmer, once a student of Ouspensky. Palmer's co-translator in this, also co-translator of the *Art of Prayer* and *Unseen Warfare*, was Madam Kadloubovsky, who for many years was Ouspenksy's secretary. [. . .] Only a short time before his death Gurdjieff had arranged for a party to go to Athos in hopes of 'reestablishing contact with the tradition' whose doctrines he had taught in such a novel manner. (347–8)

In addition to the settings already mentioned, references to the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are also scattered throughout the literature of western Yoga and one instance of this is in *Yoga International* magazine. In the article 'Out of the Desert', author Deborah Willoughby discusses mantra meditation in relation to Christian prayer, especially the Desert Fathers and the Christian meditation of Fr. John Main (Willoughby 2005). She writes:

> In the Vedic tradition, these practices [of mantra] have been passed down from master to student in an unbroken chain for millennia and are documented in countless Sanskrit scriptures. In the Christian tradition, the practice was passed on from master to disciple early in the first millennium, but the chain of oral tradition was eventually broken, and mantra meditation vanished from Christianity as it was practiced in the West. [. . .] The practice did live on, however, in the Eastern Church and was preserved and transmitted through the writings of various adepts, most notably the early desert fathers. (49)

She later says that 'by then [the time of St. Benedict] the Church was firmly in the grip of orthodoxy, and the mantric form of prayer disappeared from view, at least in the Western branch of Christianity' (52). 'In Eastern

Christianity, however, the practice of mantra meditation has remained a living tradition' (52). 'For the Christian fathers and the yogis alike, the goal is a direct experience of Divine Light. Mantra is the means' (54).

In another article in *Yoga International* titled 'The Long Journey Home',[24] Willoughby discusses similar topics, such as John Main and Christian meditation:

> Most people raised as Christians in the West today have never encountered the practice of mantra meditation in their own tradition. In the latter half of the 20th century, however, a Benedictine monk, Father John Main, came to realise that in addition to being an Eastern practice, mantra meditation is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition as well.

Speaking of the recovery of the mantra tradition in Western Christianity, she portrays the Western tradition today as not having an understanding of mantra, 'although it must have been there in the beginning when the living stream of mantra practice was flowing closer to its source. The break in the chain of oral transmission, the obsession with orthodoxy as defined by the institution of the Church [. . .] prevents us from finding the original mantras, if such there were'. Willoughby claims that 'in the yoga tradition the object of meditation is infinitely more important than the technique, and this is one reason why a yoga practitioner never chooses his or her own mantra but accepts it as a gift from the lineage of awakened masters'. She also claims that 'whatever our tradition, all that is necessary is for us to place our awareness in that mantra which according to our own faith and feeling is the locus for the sacred. The Word itself will do the rest'.

In a response to her article Abbot Joseph, the Superior of Mt. Tabor Monastery, in Redwood Valley, California, wrote the article 'Becoming Fire',' which was also published in *Yoga International* magazine.[25] Abbot Joseph comments on mantra and Eastern Christianity:

> Having been a monk in a Byzantine Catholic monastery for the past 18 years, I knew that the stream of the living tradition of what could be called the Christian counterpart of mantra meditation is not so hidden after all. While the gap may indeed be wide between the Desert Fathers and modern Western Christianity, it is not so in Eastern Christianity.

In the Desert Fathers 'prayer and meditation are often referred to by the general term "remembrance of God" (*mneme Theou*), without detailing the concrete form or content of the prayer'. Fr. Joseph speaks directly on

the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm and the *Philokalia* rather than on Fr. John Main and Fr. Laurence Freeman, saying that techniques of prayer 'are often given a secondary value [by the Fathers], the main emphasis being always to focus on the object rather than the means of meditation'. Fr. Joseph notes:

> Today the tradition of the desert continues in Eastern Christianity within the ranks of monks, and also among an increasing number of laypeople. There are those who have become somewhat jaded or dissatisfied with the inadequacy or superficiality of some forms of Western Christianity, but who have found a spiritual home in the East. Others come from no particular religious background at all but are sincerely seeking the Face of God by means of meditation, and they find they can 'drink from the stream of God's delight' (Psalm 36:8) in this tradition.

In another quote, Fr. Joseph admits the difficulty that many Eastern Christians have accepting comparisons with mantra:

> It would perhaps be rare for an Eastern Christian to compare explicitly his or her prayer with mantra meditation. Certain notable differences, more in theory than in practical application, would be the cause of that hesitation. But as we have seen, the history of the practice of prayer and meditation in Eastern Christianity has much resonance with the practice of uniting with the mantra in other traditions. It is true that Christian monologic prayer is less concerned with the 'sounding' of the word within oneself than with the meaning of it (since the word is often 'Jesus' or another name of God). Also, the goal of Christian meditation is to attain a personal communion rather than a state of 'pure, undifferentiated consciousness'.

This chapter has given the reader an idea of some of the settings in which the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are used and discussed. Some details of different groups' positions on the practices can already be seen. The next chapter will look at the substance of several accounts in more depth in order to identify the themes and issues that are at work in discussions and accounts of the practices.

Chapter 5

Discussions of the Practices

This chapter will present several discussions that go into more depth on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, which will be further analysed in subsequent chapters. Through these discussions, several major themes, such as authority, tradition and appropriation, will feature prominently in dialogue between and within groups. These discussions will come from a variety of types of sources, including online book reviews, Internet forums, published written material and blogs, but most will concern the dialogue between Orthodox and Perennialist and Emerging Churches.[1] As in the last chapter, the views of individuals expressed here are not meant to be fully representative of the groups to which they belong, but do express several fundamental differences in view on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. The juxtaposition of extreme positions is meant to highlight issues where they appear most obvious: in the clash of conflicting viewpoints.

Online book reviews are one way of capturing candid moments in which interpretations may interact and sometimes clash. This can be seen when a reviewer comments on a book and others agree or disagree, with a debate often ensuing. In such a context, insightful conversations can spontaneously emerge and lead the researcher to new conclusions on a popular debate over a topic. While the reviews may not appear to be conversations at first glance, what begins as a reviewer's monologue to the public is often transformed into a discussion as more reviewers interject with their own comments. Here, some of the most interesting comments come when one reviewer posts a comment in order to respond to an existing review for the sake of those reading the reviews.

As the *Philokalia* is the primary collection of theological/ascetic texts commonly referenced on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, the book reviews of their English translations are one important source to consider. In the thirty or more reviews on Amazon's Customer Reviews page on this text, several interesting claims are made, usually revolving around a small number

of contentious issues.[2] Reviewer Spiros D. Garbis suggests that the English translation of the *Philokalia* 'can help break down denominational barriers' and 'must be read by all Christians and non-Christians seeking a true spiritual foundation'. He adds the assertion that the *Philokalia* 'makes it possible to provide guidance and direction on matters of faith and spirituality for ALL people regardless of cultural, ethnic and religious background'. This issue of 'for whom are the texts recommended' comes up quite often in the reviews. Another reviewer, A. J. Valasek, displays a similar promotion of inclusiveness, commenting that the *Philokalia* 'is a wonderful book for those people who want to work on their inward person' and 'is valid and true even for those of us who choose not to live in a monastery'.

Several other reviewers disagree with the two previous stances and caution readers about misusing the books. One of these reviewers posts an anonymous comment titled 'precautions' that warns, 'this book is not for non-Orthodox Christians, neither is it for every Orthodox Christian'. This review maintains that, to approach these texts, it is necessary to 'have a spiritual father who can guide them through the book and insure that they do not fall into delusion'. A spiritual father, whose blessing this reviewer considers a requisite matter, should be also present in order to guide one through the book. Bob Burcheck echoes these sentiments in his post titled 'BE CAREFUL!!!!' and agrees that many people do not realize that the *Philokalia* 'should only be read by those in advanced stages of spiritual development AND ONLY under the guidance of a spiritual father'. He continues: 'without sounding condescending or arrogant, this should only be read by Orthodox Christians who are well versed in Orthodox theology'. Bob Burcheck goes even further in restricting the intended readership to only those studying to become Orthodox priests. He warns that 'delving into this without being fully prepared and under spiritual guidance from a priest could be quite literally dangerous to one's spiritual well-being'. The post of Noetic Pilgrim 'Dasa' entitled 'Be Very Careful if you decide to enter this Gate' similarly warns readers about the *Philokalia*:

> It is not to be entered into lightly. It was meant to be a gate for very spiritual, advanced and devotional Orthodox Christians to enter and to contemplate. It was always meant to be just that. It is not a book meant for students of Comparative Religion. [. . .] These texts were meant to be read by Priests and Hermits of the Orthodox tradition and the few Lay faithful who had reached a very contemplative and devotional place in their life.

Some reviewers strongly disagree with this stance and others remain undecided. An example of the first type of reviewer is eurydike, whose post 'Enter the Gate and trust' urges readers to 'please ignore the fearmongers below that tell you that you will require the services of a holy father to guide you in a reading of these holy books'. Instead, this reviewer claims that 'there is only One Holy Father, and He resides in your Heart, and is always available for guidance and counsel'. Rather than submitting to a spiritual father, the reader is told to 'Follow your heart, and never fear, or feel compelled to seek the guidance of those who would seek to control you'. JustinK agrees 'in principle' with some of the previous comments that hold to the necessity of a spiritual guide, but cites Ignatius Brianchaninov in support of the using of the 'books themselves as a sort-of spiritual father if one were not available' since 'in practice things are not always so simple'. This reviewer also questions the 'inconsistency' of cautioning only those reading the *Philokalia* and not other ascetical writings such as *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*. He wants to ensure 'that people will not be scared off by some of the (justly) cautionary statements sometimes made about this book', since 'it is a wonderful book if used properly'. Another view that is ambivalent on the absolute necessity of having a spiritual guide is expressed by a user named Charlie Brown. This reviewer begins 'by agreeing with the warnings offered by other reviewers' and affirming that 'these texts are not for beginners or the merely curious'. He goes on to say that, despite the fact that monks were the original intended audience, the texts should not only be read by them. He claims that 'New-Age dabblers will likely be turned off, but those of various beliefs who nevertheless seek deeper enlightenment will be nourished and inspired by the wisdom here'.

The Amazon reviews for the 1991 HarperSanFrancisco paperback reprint of *The Way of a Pilgrim: And the Pilgrim Continues His Way* also contain a few interesting insights.[3] 'A reader' suggests the book proves there is 'life left in Christianity' and 'for the Christian mystic, an element that is all but shunned in the current state of the Christian religion, this book will refresh, enlighten and renew your search for Truth and do it within the "confines" of religious doctrine'. Kim Boykin from the US state of Georgia claimed to 'have found this book helpful and inspiring for both my Zen practice and my Christian practice'. Another anonymous post claimed, 'if you are torn between your busy life of family obligations and work, this book will grant you inner peace. It tells you that the simple Jesus prayer which can be recited anywhere, will give you the comfort of His presence and that you are OK'. One reviewer, Terry Justison of Lake Placid, Florida, wrote of being 'introduced to this book while receiving a yoga mantra. Little did my yoga

guru know that by his casual mention of this book as a reference on the use of mantras that it would eventually result in my renouncing yoga and becoming a born again Christian. Anyone seeking God should try the "Jesus Prayer" '.

Other reviewers are more cautious of who they recommend the book to, such as an anonymous reviewer with their post titled 'not for everyone':

> [*The Way of a Pilgrim*] should never be used by people outside the Orthodox Church. By 'used' I mean applied to real life. Many good things become harmful when taken out of true tradition and placed in atmosphere of man-created religions. So please beware, because the danger of misusing this book is beyond the wildest possible conception.

Another anonymous reviewer pointed out, 'from any tradition or no tradition [. . .]. Many spiritual practices recommend the use [sic] mantras extensively for "mind protection" '. This reviewer has also 'taken up this practice in addition to the very simple practices recommended by Eckhart Tolle and am finding increasing joy and peace and happiness in my life'. Stratiotes Doxha Theon of Richmond, Missouri claims that the book 'can help Christians of all persuasions look to the right source for intimacy with God. It's not just for the Orthodox to learn this humble but powerful lesson of a life changed by way of prayer'.

In a forum on the 'Monachos.net Discussion Community' entitled 'Looking for some books', Stephanos offers a list of recommended texts that are meant to introduce the creator of the topic, Michelle, to Orthodox Christianity.[4] The 'General introduction' section of these recommendations includes the books *The Fullness of God: Frithjof Schuon on Christianity*, and *Paths of the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East*, both edited by James S. Cutsinger, *The New Man: An Interpretation of Some Parables and Miracles of Christ* by Maurice Nicoll, *A Treasury of Traditional Wisdom* by Whitall N. Perry, and the three volume series *Gnosis, Exoteric Cycle: Study and Commentaries on the Esoteric Tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy* by Boris Mouravieff. The author credits these works as helping to lead him to the Orthodox Church, but does acknowledge that 'these books are not written by Orthodox authors and some Monachos members will no doubt consider them "heretical" and perhaps even "dangerous" '. He also admits that Mouravieff's *Gnosis* series is 'not really for beginners'. As Stephanos expected, there is a negative response to these suggestions, which begins with a post by Petru voda who is said to be a monk of thirty years and the close disciple of Archimandrite Sophrony. He considers all of the selections in this first section of

recommendations 'totally inappropriate for this list' and thanks God that Stephanos has found his way past 'the intellectual plani [delusion] of Jacob Needleman, Frithjof Schoun, James Cutsinger, Maurice Nicoll, and the publishing house of Fons Vitae, founded by Sheik Frithjof Schoun'. Stephanos replies by defending his choices, stating, 'in our ignorant times the greatest enemy of faith is secular humanism, and the Traditionalist thinkers (Guenon, Schuon, Lings, etc.) indeed fight a good fight against it. We should not willingly discard such valuable allies, even though their truth is incomplete'. Petru voda responds with a lengthy rebuttal, claiming that 'the entire school of Philosophia perennis, the exoteric/esoteric underpinning, the metaphysical convergence of all orthodox religions – this is not new, nor unique to Guenon or Schuon'. He says that 'it has been around long before we were born. But they are not allies of Orthodox Christianity and they are certainly not allies of Christ'. He points out that the Philosophia perennis is 'a very comfortable place to inhabit' because one can associate with 'Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Native American Indians and feel no conflict, because, after all, according to this school of Philosophia perennis, though we are dressed differently, and though our Scriptures if understood only exoterically, we are after all one and the same'. Petru voda goes on to say:

> Be assured you are certainly not the first to come to Orthodoxy via this route. Sadly, I have personally met only one person who became in his heart Orthodox after having spent time with these 'allies.' Bishop Kallistos (Ware) was sadly duped into attending their conference (papers of which are published in 'Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East'). This book is a travesty and I know that Bishop Kallistos is very disheartened that he was not warned about the true nature of this conference beforehand.

Petru voda states simply, 'I do not "hate" persons of other Faiths. But I do not follow them' and then describes the disappointing experience of a friend with Seyyed-Hossein Nasr. In his evaluation of Philosophia perennis, he says, 'there is in this school a total misunderstanding of Logos. The artificial "escape route" of exoterism and esoterism is certainly clever, but incorrect'. Lastly, he makes the point that

> the full moon reflects equally in five separate buckets. This does not mean that the 'true' esoteric understanding of a Faith, and the choosing

of one 'orthodoxy' with their misunderstanding and very dangerous understanding regarding the Logos are correct or compatible with Orthodox Christianity.

The authors then continue to claim that one is misunderstanding the other and the discussion occasionally verges on insults, or at least very pointed critiques. Stephanos maintains that he never claimed to accept everything the Traditionalist school has to offer, specifically the 'transcendent unity of religions', but finds some of their insights valuable. On the contrary, Petru voda maintains that 'there is no value in the "spirituality" of Schuon' and his fellow Traditionalists and claims that this is not merely his opinion, but 'is evidenced by the Doctrine of the Orthodox Church. One can not straddle the fence. You are either with Christ or not – that is your personal decision'. In a later post he claims:

> [I am] simply saying that the Gnosis of F. Schuon is mistaken, according to the Doctrine of the Orthodox Church. I have long personal experience with this entire 'dialougue.' Though, I never met F. Schuon, my Spiritual Father, Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) did. I know personally five people who were received by F. Schuon into his tariqya. Of these five, only one, having embraced Orthodox Christianity, after a long and painful inner warfare, has become himself a true staretz.

At this point others become more involved in the conversation, with one user, Trudy, outraged that Stephanos would call a monk of thirty years who is the spiritual grandson of Silouan the Athonite, 'prone to self-righteousness, faintheartedness, self-advertising and idle talk'. Byron Jack Gaist starts his comment by making it clear that he sees points of similarity in religions which are academically interesting and possibly spiritually beneficial if a spiritual supervisor is consulted. Still he has serious doubts:

> [I doubt] very much that there exists a sempiternal set of universal teachings which could come under the label philosophia perennis. Even if such a teaching could be established, it would still only be in the best instance auxilliary [sic] to our Holy Orthodoxy, which is not a philosophy but truth deriving from Jesus Christ, the Truth. In other words, I do think Traditionalist thought has something of value to offer, but only in the sense St Basil suggested young Christians should read the Greek

> philosophers: taking whatever is good and confirming the faith (even if this is only a small part, and not the direct message or intent of the authors we are talking about), and leaving aside what is not.

Byron Jack Gaist makes another relevant point:

> [T]he simpler and narrower the path, the more chances there are of reaching one's destination. It's just that those of us who, like myself, came to Orthodoxy via the complex route of modern thought [. . .] might need to respond intelligently and cogently to those talented people who veer ideologically from the faith for whatever reason, or to those parts of ourselves that are still conditioned by secular thought.

After another post by Stephanos which quotes Frithjof Schuon, Petru voda declares 'I see no need for yet more quotations from Sufis, certainly not vis a vis the Words of Christ. Schuon is not Christian (in any sense of the word) nor is he a Father of the Church'. In a post by yet another contributor, Scott Pierson admits being led to the Orthodox Church by the writings of Julius Evola and then Guenon, Schuon and Nasr, who 'presented Orthdoxy and the Church Fathers in a more positive light' than Evola. As Scott Pierson describes at length,

> There are 'Orthodox' Traditionalist writers but I do tend to detect a lot of hetrodoxy in most of their views. Especially the attempt to reduce the Trinity and the personal nature of God to a 'relatively absolute' position and to focous instead on an impersonal monistic God. They also tend to speak of Christianity as simple one tradition among others no better or worse. They say that its best to choose a tradition based on which one you have accesses to and based on personal, racial and ethnic reasons. Schoun for example teaches that Christianty is meant primarily for people of a certain type and that Christians should not try to convert Asians (or American Indians, etc). Gueonon was originaly a Christian but he couldn't find any Christian 'esotericists' to initate him so he converted islam to follow some sufi teacher. The only Orthodox author associated with traditionalism who seems to be free from most of these errors is Phillip Sherrard author of 'Christianity Linaments of a Sacred Tradition'. He speaks of the personal Trinitarian nature of God and appears to consider Christianty to be more then simple one choice among others . . . But then I'm not sure if he is really 100% a traditionalist?

In a second forum entitled 'On Boris Mouravieff's "Gnosis" ', a discussion of the appropriateness of books continues from the first forum.[5] The user Ken McRae disagrees with the recommendation of the *Gnosis* trilogy by Boris Mouravieff. As he puts it,

> Not only is this work 'not really for beginners', it is 'not really' for Christians, and least of all for Orthodox Christians. It claims to be a revelation of the esoteric, or veiled teachings of the Philokalia. However, the spirit breathing in this 'Gnosis' is so obviously foreign to that breathing in the hallowed pages of the Philokalia, that even an 'outsider' like myself can plainly see that.

He quotes from volume two of the trilogy and points out that Mouravieff is teaching a doctrine of reincarnation of the soul. Adding to the urgency and severity of the post's tone, he says, 'I cannot stress enough that, if you're interested in the true Orthodox faith, then avoid the "Gnosis" of Boris Mouravieff like the plague itself. A gnosis it is, without question, but most certainly not the holy gnosis transmitted on the hallowed pages of the Philokalia'. At this point Stephanos defends his own recommendation, saying that the dangers mentioned by Ken McRae are why he added the disclaimer that the books were not for beginners. He makes the assertion that 'some strange statements notwithstanding, Mouravieff's is the only full-scale attempt to draw wide-ranging metaphysical conclusions from the Orthodox doctrine', but again adds that 'timid souls should definitely stay away from it'. Forum moderator M. C. Steenberg points out that, according to the quotes provided by Ken McRae, 'Mouravieff is making his argument from almost the same logical framework as Origen, who taught something similar to "reincarnation", approached from essentially the same set of observations and conclusions'.

The notion that the texts are 'not for beginners' is questioned by Byron Jack Gaist, who instead describes them as texts 'to be read as interesting philosophical diversions by those whose faith is not likely to be undermined'. He also brings up the Praxis Research Institute, which he believes continues the work of Mouravieff. Regarding Mouravieff, Byron Jack Gaist considers it interesting that this 'renegade disciple of the Greek-Armenian guru, Gurdjieff, himself from a predominantly Orthodox background (in terms of where Gurdjieff grew up, not in terms of his doctrine)' ends up bringing 'the gnostic "Fourth Way" slightly (only slightly) further back in line with the tradition'. He concludes his post by pondering whether

Robin Amis, director of the Praxis Research Institute, is 'actually teaching something reasonably Orthodox'. Ken McRae replies that Mouravieff knew that reincarnation was a heresy in the Orthodox Church but defiantly taught it as a secret teaching that was orally handed down to him from an unknown source, who commissioned his work to correct the work of P. D. Ouspensky's *Fragments of an Unknown Teaching*. Ken McRae claims that Ouspensky's work derives from Sufi 'Wisdom' traditions and leads to syncretism. The same user notes that the translator of the *Gnosis* trilogy claims that Mouravieff's knowledge was directly taken from the Orthodox Christian tradition, especially the *Philokalia*. Quoting Mouravieff's third volume, Ken McRae criticizes Mouravieff's view of the forgotten tradition of conscious transformation in Christianity as directly equivalent to yogic and Sufic traditions, coming to the conclusion that he is just as syncretic as G. I. Gurdjieff and P. D. Ouspensky. This syncretism is portrayed, according to Ken McRae, as in agreement with the Church Fathers but also with the inner teachings of all religions. Volume three of this trilogy is again quoted, making the point that returning to ancient tradition is moving into an unknown future rather than back to medieval Russian Orthodoxy. Ken McRae says that Mouravieff believes that it is impossible for an ordinary Christian to reach *theosis* without his particular brand of *gnosis*: 'Now, how do you propose to reconcile or harmonize such a radical claim with Patristic tradition? The two appear totally irreconcilable in my eyes.'

Ken McRae quotes more from the trilogy and states that, for Mouravieff and the Brotherhood he claims to represent, 'the Gnosis (or System of esoteric Christianity) [. . .] constitutes the "essence" or core of true Christianity' and 'together with all other forms of esoterica, comprises a single unified Tradition, a Tradition that forms the essential core and basis of all exoteric world religions'. The user complains that this leads to the view that the Orthodox Church, in its exoteric aspects, is simply utilitarian and is ultimately dispensable, existing as the adaptation of a particular community to the same higher truth. He continues:

> According to Mouravieff's gnosis, or school of thought, Hindus, Buddhists, Sufis, and all other non-Christians are just as capable as Orthodox Christians of being born again and entering the Kingdom of God; just so long as they receive the 'full' gnosis of the Tradition, and rigorously engage themselves in the esoteric work which is required.

Ken McRae views this as 'deeply heretical' and a type of 'Christless Christianity [. . .] and thus the basis for the religion of the coming Anti-Christ'.

Questioning how this 'Tradition' is defined by Mouravieff, M. C. Steenberg says that, 'under their veils, such groups as this are all fairly much the same'. Again, Ken McRae responds and claims that what defines them seems to be kept secret, and that a secret society has orally passed along this information from within the Orthodox Church from the third century until the mid-twentieth century when it finally came out of the shadows to being fully formulated by Mouravieff.

Byron Jack Gaist explains that the Praxis Research Institute is the work of Robin Amis, 'who claims to have encountered a secret tradition of personal transformation on – Mt Athos, of all places!' He claims that while Amis has been influenced by Mouravieff, his writings do not seem to be as 'radical' and appear to be 'apart from the use of "psychobabble" terminology [. . .] the standard use of the Jesus Prayer'. Regarding an online book by an Athonite abbot on the Praxis website, Byron Jack Gaist says, 'if this is a heretical teaching, then presumably we are not talking about a real Archimandrite or a real work, or the real Archimandrite whose book this is, doesn't know his work is being misappropriated in this way'. Scott Pierson claims that the institute has the ring of 'Traditionalism', which he distinguishes from 'Orthodox Traditionalism'. He applauds 'Traditionalist' efforts to expose 'the flaws of "modernity", secularism, socialism, capitalism, democracy and various new age pseudo religions' but adds that 'they have this weird idea that all "traditional" religions point out the same truths'. He continues, saying that Fr. Seraphim Rose was led to the Orthodox Church by the writings of Guenon and also mentioning his own similar journey from Traditionalist writings to the Orthodox Church. Byron Jack Gaist agrees that 'there is a lot to commend in Traditionalist thought, but with a big proviso it is understood where some of that thinking is leading (e.g. perennial philosophy, occultism, fascism etc.)'. He then asks how Philip Sherrard's ideas are to be interpreted by the Orthodox Church since, although Byron Jack Gaist knows him as a Traditionalist, 'he is the Orthodox translator of the *Philokalia* into English'.

Scott Pierson rethinks his proposed connection between Praxis Research Institute and Traditionalism, acknowledging that 'the idea that all religions teach the same "esoteric" truths is pretty common now and it might not be related'. This user addresses the question of Philip Sherrard's Traditionalist views and points out that in Sherrard's book *Christianity: Lineaments of a Sacred Tradition*, the author appears to not 'buy into some aspects of Traditionalism', but instead takes issue with 'Guenon's labelling of the Trinity as the "relative absolute" and basically defends the Personal Trinitarian nature of God'. Scott Pierson also points out that Sherrard 'appears to

consider Christianity more then simple "one tradition among many" '. He appears a little more orthodox than some of the other "Orthodox" authors who consider themselves Traditionalist/Perennial Philosophers'. Owen Jones (Seraphim) also gives his thoughts on Traditionalism as a perennialist gnostic theology built on alienation which believes in 'an esoteric truth that relativizes dogma' and sees no need for 'help from other people to guide them'.

Next, Ken McRae addresses the question of whether Gurdjieff ever went to Mount Athos himself:

> While G [Gurdjieff] never took any of his students with him to the Holy Mountain, it is generally believed he was there several times himself; and that he made arrangements, just before his death, to take a group of them with him; which never happened, according to plan. Nevertheless, according to Amis and other sources, G instructed his students to establish contact with the Inner Tradition on the Holy Mountain, after his passing. And it seems they took his advice.

He pursues this topic further:

> Ouspensky apparently established a relationship of sorts with Father Nikon, a hermit of the Holy Mountain; another G disciple named Bogachevsky became a monk on the Holy Mountain, for a short time; it is believed Mouravieff established contact as well; Amis, Mouravieff's disciple, claims to be a regular pilgrim there (ever since '82/83); and says he had some kind of relationship with Elder Paisios. He also claims that the English translation of the Philokalia can be largely attributed to the work and influence of G and Ouspensky. Palmer (one of the three translators of the English edition of the Philokalia) was a former disciple of Ouspensky's, Amis says.

Ken McRae then provides two lengthy quotes which link Gurdjieff to Mount Athos.[6] Finishing up the discussion, Byron Jack Gaist asks:

> Can the Work really be seen as Orthodox Christianity minus the cultural / theological accoutrements? Or is it something else altogether? Of course, once we are not talking any longer about God, then it surely is 'something else' by definition, but are the psychological principles of the Work at least true in some way to Orthodox Christian psychology and anthropology?

Yet another discussion on this site which is of interest here is titled 'Prince Charles demands more ikons on display in British Museum' and begins with a conversation on Prince Charles' familial and personal links to the Orthodox Church.[7] The prince is noted as a sponsor of the journal *Temenos*, co-founded by Philip Sherrard and Katherine Raine, which is concerned with Perennialist topics. Byron Jack Gaist gives a general description of this Traditionalist perspective:

> Traditionalists tend to embrace one spiritual tradition and follow it through consistently, but do not doubt the validity of other traditions. They also espouse the idea that there exists a timeless wisdom known as the philosophia perennis which lies at the heart of every traditional religion.

At this point Petru voda again joins the conversation claiming that Frijtof Schuon, his successor Martin Lings and others involved with *Temenos*, 'are in the deepest prelest, namely pride' and paraphrases Sherrard as saying 'contrary to the belief of the Orthodox Church and the words of our Saviour, that Christianity can no longer claim to be the sole repository of Truth. This is clearly heretical'. He then expresses sadness that many of the posts of Byron Jack Gaist seem 'far too "generous" ' regarding the Traditionalists, who are 'a betrayal of Orthodox Christianity. One needs only to understand their position on the Logos (that is non-personal)'. He also states that Archimandrite Sophrony spoke with Schuon and that 'Schuon considered Father Sophrony to be caught in the web of Orthodox teaching'.

Responding to this, Byron Jack Gaist assures Petru voda that he was not speaking for or against Traditionalism, but rather helping another user understand the school that has influenced certain positive statements made by Prince Charles about Islam. He agrees that Petru voda is

> correct in spotting an overly 'generous' tone in some of my posts. I have no doubt that Christianity is the sole repository of Truth, but alas for the time being I am still struggling to make this dogmatic assertion a reality for myself. [. . .] What I am having difficulty doing, is saying that no holiness can exist outside the visible boundary of the Orthodox Church. I cannot bring myself to condemn all wise and good people from other religious traditions to darkness. I would rather believe that God moves in mysterious ways, that a person may be a follower of Jesus without realising it.

Continuing this post, he agrees that 'dogmatic' Traditionalism can breed spiritual pride but adds that 'I would be lying if I said I disagree with everything it has to say'. After affirming his belief in a personal Logos, he claims he 'would say regarding the Traditionalists, what I would say regarding other religions: take what is good and useful and not deluded, measure it against the Truth of Christ as the Church teaches it, and throw away the rest'. He concludes his post by stating, 'I do not speak from the perspective of a true Christian, but as a seeker still trying to understand, so please pray to God for me to forgive my error and show me a better way'.

On the popular social networking site 'MySpace', there is an online forum on 'Traditionalist Studies' that occasionally explores the relationship between Christianity and Traditionalism. One topic on 'Orthodox Christianity' deals more specifically with the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm.[8] Tobias addresses a multi-part question on the subject by a member of the forum who had become interested in Orthodoxy from reading Cutsinger's *Paths to the Heart* and assorted quotations from the *Philokalia*: '1. Is there an esoteric initiatic rite associated with hesychia? [. . .] 2. Can any Christian practise the invocation of the Name of Jesus, or must it be prescribed by a master? [. . .] 3. Are there other practices associated with this tradition? [. . .] 4. Are there many authentic living authorities and centres? I understand that Mt. Athos is one of the major centres in the world'. In responding to the first question, Tobias remarks:

> There is no formalized initiatic rite into hesychasm, but it is usually practiced via repetition of the Jesus Prayer or Invocation of the Name [. . .]. Just so long as we're clear, hesychasm being the practice of stillness, hesychia is stillness realized. Similarly, there's no initiatic rite associated with practicing the Jesus Prayer, but there are certain emphasized guidelines under which one practices the Invocation.

Regarding the second question, he responds that,

> Yes, any Orthodox can practice the Invocation. The Jesus Prayer admits of many levels of involvement and intensity. Most Orthodox, perhaps, do not use the Invocation in the hopes of achieving hesychia, though even they would admit that Invocation even on a basic level brings with it a certain hesychia. A spiritual master is not needed on most of these levels, but the further one is consciously trying to bring oneself mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and – perhaps the most important as far as

> hesychasts are concerned — physically into line with the Jesus Prayer, the more one should seek the guidance of [a] spiritual father.

Tobias elaborates on this theme:

> A certain amount of spiritual 'common sense' is assumed for anybody practicing the Jesus Prayer, in that they should know that while the practice is not withheld, deeper penetrations of it are reserved for those who leave themselves open to a certain degree of guidance. The spiritual master typically then imposes varying traditional restrictions and practices. The only formalism imposed upon the Jesus Prayer is this idea of spiritual guidance. I think that most spiritual masters would say that everyone making the Invocation should have a spiritual master, but that given the dearth of masters, it is better to say it in a 'lessened' way than not to say it at all.

Tobias then explores the notion of esoteric and exoteric in relation to hesychasm:

> [T]he Orthodox, especially as regards the Jesus Prayer, are trying to balance a simultaneous esoterism and exoterism. In the sense that fewer people choose these more intense levels of Invocation, and even fewer achieve them, the hesychastic side of Invocation is of course esoteric. But it is an esoterism that virtually every Orthodox knows about, and knows is available to him provided he seek guidance into it. It has sometimes been referred to as an 'exoteric esoterism' or 'esoteric exoterism.' Its methods, practices, and descriptions of realization are well known and available to all, so in that sense it is not esoteric. Doubtless the final goal of hesychasm – hesychia – is elusive, and therefore esoteric. But the practice itself is not. Orthodox would perhaps say that in hesychasm, the Hidden is available to all. [. . .] We may perhaps sum all this up by saying that hesychia is esoteric, while hesychasm is not.

Regarding the reception of this distinction by those within the Orthodox Church, Tobias writes, 'it's not a distinction that many Orthodox would easily understand'. He then points to the audio compact discs of the 'Paths to the Heart' conference and notes that Cutsinger and Ware discuss this 'balancing act' within Orthodoxy between the esoteric and exoteric.

In a short response to the third question, Tobias speaks of hesychastic practices such as praying while sitting or 'slumping over' and praying with eyes closed or in the dark as 'cutting against the grain' of typical Orthodox praxis. The fourth question of 'authentic living authorities and centers' is addressed as follows:

> General Orthodox sentiment assumes that every monastery is deeply involved in practicing the Jesus Prayer. Experience teaches us that while this is true, some take it more seriously or soberly than others. To answer your question more directly: there are monasteries par excellence, as well as some bishops and priests who act as centers themselves, but these are relatively spread throughout the world.

Tobias affirms that, although 'there are many authentic centers or monasteries' whose numbers are dwindling, Mount Athos is the 'prime center of hesychasm'. He also mentions the Greek monastery of St. Anthony's in Arizona set up by Athonite monk Elder Ephraim, saying it is seen by many Orthodox as 'the Mt. Athos of North America'.

Next, Desmond replies to the same questions from his own perspective. He defines the hesychast:

> The Hesychast is the person who pursues this [apophatic] experience under the direct guidance of a spiritual elder as a complement to the cataphatic or affirmative prayer that is characteristic of the sacraments and scriptures. Schuon teaches us that the sacraments themselves, despite their non-exclusive nature, constitute a preeminently esoteric initiation. In this sense nothing additional is needed. However, although one need not necessarily enter into the monastic life to pursue Hesychia, the Tonsure of the Monk is an instance of an additional initiatic rite of an exclusive character.

Desmond comments on the need for a spiritual advisor by reference to his own experience:

> As a person with years of untutored experience practicing self-directed spiritual disciplines, I can firmly attest to the capability of even the seemingly simplest of disciplines to lead one astray into the realms of self-delusion and fantasy. Each practice within every spiritual tradition

> requires the appropriate authority without which its practice is rendered either dangerous or inefficacious.

He mentions a further danger when one has not made a commitment to one spiritual path 'of exposing oneself unnecessarily to a multitude of mutually exclusive symbolisms with the attendant disorientation and confusion that entails when an attempt has been made to adapt oneself superficially to more than one spiritual form'. Desmond insists on the guidance of a spiritual advisor since 'there are emotional and psychological stresses involved at each stage' which it is the job of the advisor to discern and combat, leading the disciple towards love of God. Desmond later posted another comment that posed a question about Metropolitan Kallistos Ware and whether 'he is an adherent of the traditionalist perspective accepting such notions as the perennial philosophy' since he has participated in conferences with James Cutsinger and Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Desmond explains that he 'became immersed in Orthodox Christianity for a short time last year following one of the many tangents that I was so prone to prior to discovering Islam. During this time I naturally gravitated toward the works of Bishop Kallistos as qualified and reliable expositions of this tradition'. Tobias follows this up with a clarification:

> I was not suggesting anyone practice the Jesus Prayer without guidance. The Jesus Prayer has an incredibly varied use, and the one that Zachary was referring to – hesychasm – was one which called for a specific type of spiritual master. Some practicing hesychasts would say that, unless one's priest were using the Jesus Prayer for other than devotional purposes, one should refrain from practicing hesychasm until one found a more hesychastic-oriented master.

He cites Metropolitan Kallistos who 'seems to suggest that practicing a kind of minimized hesychasm is acceptable without a hesychastic spiritual master – though in such circumstances one would not seek to learn advanced breathing techniques or the like'. Addressing Desmond's comment about hesychasm as apophatic prayer, Tobias says 'most hesychasts are impatient to point out that the Invocation has a kataphatic, positive character that far outweighs its power to negate'. He expands on this point: 'Indeed, the Orthodox pride themselves on the fact that the liturgical cycle and traditional prayers dissolve the distinction between the two viewpoints – esoteric vs. exoteric, apophatic vs. kataphatic, bhaktic vs. jnanic'.

Tobias goes into some detail regarding Metropolitan Kallistos' relationship to Traditionalist thought:

> I honestly can't say whether Bishop Kallistos is a card-carrying member of Perennialism or no. Obviously, the fact that he is the bishop of a non-Perennialist group would make it hard for him to say so if he were. But he is clearly sympathetic to some degree, and he is an unassailable favorite of the Christian Perennialists. He is also a friend of Dr. Cutsinger's. He is as familiar with the works of the Perennialists as anyone, and is considered something of an authority. Incidentally, the only disagreement he had at the Paths conference was with, as he argued, Cutsinger's glossing over the Orthodox claim that the esoteric had been made exoteric and vice versa in Christ, and that in Orthodoxy all paths and truths were equally hidden and revealed. [. . .] This is actually one of the 'perennial' topics among Christian Perennialists.

He then quotes a question posed by forum member Zachary who asked: 'Is it a problem, from the point of view of an Orthodox Christian, to have certain esoteric rites exoterized? Or are they somewhat spiritually efficacious for the Christian who participates in them and doesn't understand their meaning?' Tobias does not claim to have any easy answers to this question but, after examining relevant passages from the New Testament, concludes, 'Christ wanted almost all esoteric truths expressed exoterically, regardless of whether they were efficacious for the listeners. For this reason, Orthodox Christianity is very suspicious of any kind of esoterism that does not reveal itself to all'.

Another engagement of a Perennialist perspective of hesychasm with a more traditional one appears in the collection *Paths to the Heart*, based on a conference of the same name, which was mentioned in the last chapter (Cutsinger 2002). Following a foreword by Cutsinger, the book begins with a chapter by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. This chapter entitled 'How Do We Enter the Heart?' begins by exploring the common understanding of 'deep heart' in Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Sufi sources. Ware notes that some Orthodox authors do not have this understanding of the heart as the 'virgin point' and centre of the human person where God indwells and instead use 'heart' in a more Platonist scheme to mean the 'intellect' or *nous*, or to signify the affective part of the human soul (11). Still, he says many authors do use 'heart' in the sense that is shared with its usage in Sufi writings and in the writings of Thomas Merton.

The Jesus Prayer is named as 'the key that opens the door' to the heart in the Orthodox tradition (16). Ware then speaks about the use of the Jesus

Prayer and 'parallels between Eastern Orthodoxy and Sufism', especially in the physical techniques such as control of breathing and bodily exercises (20). He claims:

> So close are the points of resemblance as to render it highly probable that there has been some direct contact between the two traditions. But, to the best of my knowledge, no one has so far discovered specific evidence indicating when and where this contact took place. Has Sufism influenced Hesychasm, or vice-versa? Or was the influence mutual? Here is a challenging area for future research. (20)

However, after noting these similarities, Ware admits,

> it would not be honest for me as a Christian to pass over what I am bound to regard as a crucial point of difference. The Jesus Prayer is an invocation, not simply of God, but specifically of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity. We are not calling upon the Supreme Being in general terms, but we are speaking precisely to God incarnate, the Son of the eternal Father who is also Son of Mary (20–1). Without overlooking the universality of Christ the Logos, 'the true light that enlightens everyone who comes into the world' (John 1:9), we cannot but emphasize the historicity of the Jesus Prayer. We are invoking Christ by the human name 'Jesus' (23).

Ware then uses the analogy of a picture-frame that he used in *The Power of the Name* to compare the techniques of the Jesus Prayer and the discipline of repetitive prayer to the frame of a particular picture and the person of Jesus as that picture (Ware 1986*a*). He explains: 'Most pictures have frames, and all picture-frames have certain characteristics in common; yet the pictures within the frames may be altogether diverse' (23). He says the 'frame' of the techniques is not indispensable to the Jesus Prayer and so, while other practices may be similar, they point to a different goal or 'picture' (23). 'The essential point of the Jesus Prayer is not how we pray, not the exterior techniques, but to whom we are speaking' (23).

Ware apologizes for seeming to overemphasize the distinctiveness of the Jesus Prayer from Sufism but 'cannot in conscience speak otherwise. There can be no true dialogue that does not acknowledge the distinctiveness of each side in the interchange' (21). Ware suggests the world's need for 'not people who say prayer from time to time but people who are prayer all the time', especially in times of contemporary religious violence, echoing Cutsinger's foreword to the book.

Later in the book are two chapters based on presentations by other Orthodox authorities: Vincent Rossi, Director of Education for the American Exarchate of the Jerusalem Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church, writes on 'The Remembrance of God in the Early Hesychast Fathers' and John Chryssavgis, Professor of Theology and former Dean at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, on 'Contemporary Witness of the Hesychast Experience' (chapters 5 and 6; 277–8). Both chapters have their own merits, but it is the next chapter, James Cutsinger's 'Hesychia: An Orthodox Opening to Esoteric Ecumenism', that directly takes on the issues involved in Perennialism and the Jesus Prayer. Cutsinger emphasizes the distinction between an ecumenism that leads to rejection of the primary doctrines of various faiths and an ecumenism that recognizes and respects the external and formal differences, but sees the convergence of these differences in a transcendent realm. Cutsinger bases this conclusion on an understanding of the incarnation that sees the historical figure of Jesus as one primary revelation of the Logos of God, but not the only revelation. This allows for other traditions to be authentic revelations of the Word and paths to salvation (227–31).

Cutsinger argues for a thoroughgoing hesychasm that follows the instructions for absolutely imageless prayer given by Evagrius, Pseudo-Dionysius and Gregory of Sinai. This hesychasm is in contrast to an 'average Hesychasm' 'in which the absolute imprescriptibility of the Divine Essence and the operative rigor of a truly intellective detachment are both sacrificed to the needs of a more conventional piety' based on devotion to the person of Jesus (246). He disagrees with several of the points Ware made in the previous chapter and extends the picture-frame analogy into a window-frame analogy. Rather than the various methods of prayer in different traditions acting as similar frames for very different pictures, for Cutsinger, 'if we wish to follow the Hesychast path to the heart, it is Jesus who must be approached as the frame – the frame, not of a portrait, but of a window' (250). He expands on this point:

> Seekers living in the Christian house must certainly not turn their backs on this window, supposing it to be too narrow to show them the truth. But neither should they remain at a distance, as if they were admiring a favorite painting from across a gallery. They must step forward and lift up the sash, placing their head and shoulders inside its ample opening. What they shall see then, of course, is no longer the frame, but instead the bountiful emptiness of a mountain valley and across its verdant expanse, if they look carefully, the outlines of other houses with windows not their own.

Mark J. Berry's 'Way Out West' blogpost 'The Jesus Prayer' and the commentary on it reveals several of the familiar leitmotifs that haunt many of these discussions.[9] The blog's author begins with some personal ruminations on the Jesus Prayer: 'It seems things like new-monasticism and ancient-future are current themes (well have been for 5 years or more really), one of the things that crops up a lot is the "Jesus Prayer" '. He claims 'it is a bit like a "centring" meditation with "Jesus Christ, son of God have mercy on me" (or similar) as the mantra'. Berry then quotes from Hesychius of Jerusalem and Nicephorus the Solitary, two influential Church Fathers within Orthodoxy who wrote about the Jesus Prayer and other monastic themes.

One user who calls himself Joe strongly disagrees with certain aspects of Mark J. Berry's post. He claims, 'it's a bit NOT like all of the above [i.e. centering meditation or yoga]. It may seem to be "a bit" yogic to someone who has no grounding at all in the spirituality (i.e. the context) from which the "Jesus Prayer" is practiced as an applied science. That context is obviously the Orthodox Church'. Thus, he takes issue with the perception that it is 'yogic', implying that this 'misinterpretation' could only be a result of a lack of background in the theology Orthodox Church. Joe appears frustrated that, while 'Emerging/Emergents are really hot about the practice of the "Jesus Prayer" ', they 'ignore the prerequisites for the practice of this spirituality that are integral to these texts'. He lists these prerequisites as:

> (1) Being an Orthodox Christian (2) Having a Father-Confessor (Orthodox Priest or Elder) to guide one in the practice of this spirituality (i.e. 'living out the Gospel') (3) Belonging to a parish or monastic community wherein one might partake of the Sacrament of Sacraments, the very food for our journey of salvation: the Holy Eucharist. (Note step 1 is a pre-req. for all following steps!).

He notes that, worse than ignoring these is 'the most immediate danger' of spiritual illusion (*plani* or *prelest*), which he says is a point that he has never come across in Emerging/Emergents writings on monastic topics. Regarding this illusion, Joe explains that 'the symptoms are obvious. The results disastrous. Skipping the prerequisites and calling them unnecessary, in other words, wrongfooting at the very start is a stumble into prelest/plani/illusion/delusion. Your use of "mantra" and "centering prayer" shows that you have taken such a step'. About forty minutes after this first post, Joe leaves another comment urging Mark J. Berry to continue using the Jesus Prayer as a 'simple prayer for mercy to the Lord Jesus Christ' but

not to 'pretend that you are doing it in the same way and with the same results as the Saints of the Orthodox Church if you aren't in the Orthodox Church'.

Mark J. Berry begins his reply by admitting that he has not read the *Philokalia* and agrees with Joe in that 'the three "prerequisites" are not things I take lightly . . . though I guess we may disagree on an understanding of them . . . I do not hold them in an institutional context as you seem to. e.g. an understanding of Orthodoxy or even Priesthood!' He then stresses

> the importance of sacramental community and of community accountability runs through Emerging Church as much as anywhere else, though many ECs would seek to separate it from the power games that are often played in Churches and are implicit in the 'you are not doing it properly' theme of you comment.

Berry ends the comment by saying that God is his guide and confessor, rather than another human, and that if he and the Emergent Church misstep on the issue, they do so in '(a) faith (b) knowledge of forgiveness and (c) grace'.

Joe then leaves another two comments, the first questioning why, if God is Mark J. Berry's only guide and confessor, there is a need to quote Orthodox Fathers 'OUT OF CONTEXT as support for your undertakings? If you twist their words into supports for "centering prayer" or "mantra" then it is really better for all concerned not to use their words at all'. In his second comment Joe gives his own views:

> The words of the Saints are used to lend a sort of 'ancient' street cred to ECs but to the members of the 'ancient' (hey guys, 'ancient' doesn't mean dead!) Churches, it makes you guys look like a bunch of poseurs, like the rich white suburban teenage mall rats decked out like hip-hop gangstas from the quote 'Hood unquote.

Mark J. Berry responds to this claim by insisting that he is not 'using' the quotes to lend support to his views, but simply reflecting on these mystical writings, as are 'many in the EC/Alt.Worship world', with which they are not yet very familiar. He claims to use the phrases 'Centering Prayer' and 'mantra' as they are used by 'modern mystics' like Thomas Merton and

Anthony De Mello, apologizing if this 'offends your sensibilities or your feeling of "ownership" of the Mystics and their words'. He continues:

> I do not need to be in the Egyptian Desert for God to speak to me through the words of the Desert Fathers, just as I do not need to observe all the rituals of Judaism for the teachings of the Old Testament to have meaning. The CONTEXT that is important for me is to allow God to speak through whatever he chooses to . . . not in the way of men but in the way of God.

Finishing the post, he asks Joe to 'please feel free to let me and God journey together in whatever way he see fit'.

In a second post, Mark J. Berry replies to the criticism about using the Jesus Prayer and Orthodox Fathers as 'street cred' saying 'just remember that whilst this may well be your opinion . . . doesn't mean its correct'. He insists that he has no desire to be hip and refers to these quotes and practices as part of a 'process of discovery' from his 'low-church evangelical background where I was not exposed to the riches of the Christian traditions (and other traditions!)'. He continues, 'I am truly sorry if you don't like the fact that things which you feel are "yours" are now being explored by others and in "new" ways'.

Joe goes into detail about his personal history and claims to have been an evangelical 'in another life', comparing his own journey into the Orthodox Church with 'the ones that the ECs may or may not be undertaking at this present moment'. He recounts his first meeting with someone from the Emerging Church movement and criticizes his understanding of 'the actual Body and Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist' because he says it is true for him but not necessarily so for many of his fellow movement members. Joe claims that this man's idea that 'personal conviction (it's between me-n-God) overruled even this basic, unitive principle' of communion in shared faith is akin to gnosticism. Extending his argument, Joe chastises the way the man 'swept up what he could carry and wasted it by making it into little more than gnosticism', claiming instead that if one 'has truly discovered the Treasure of the Orthodox Church, the Treasure isn't swept up and carried away, one's own self is swept up and carried away. Away back Home'. The author reiterates his disdain for the notion of being 'driven individually by the "tyranny of private judgement"' and says that many of those in the Emergent Church movement seem to him to be 'headed towards the make-it-up-as-we-go along -Evanglical PLUS – ancient-future

direction, the next "big thing" within evangelical Protestantism'. Instead of agreeing that he is hoarding the treasure of his church, he is insistent that he wants to give all of it, presumably implying that if any is to be taken, all of it should be.

Mark J. Berry suggests that they are at an impasse which is based on two issues '(a) there is a 'true' Christian expression and all others are inadequate and (b) seeing the riches of those traditions as being held by the tradition itself'. Replying to the previous post, he argues that he does not 'want to take any treasures away from the Orthodox Church, The Catholic Church, the Evangelical Church or any other though they all have been communities where treasure has been born/discovered' but rather sees all treasures as belonging to God alone and up to God to distribute. Speaking for the Emergent Church movement, he affirms 'we do not want to be pigeon holed or labelled or "owned" by any tradition – or its claims to be the authentic – new testament Church – all have done/said that over the years' and reaffirms that he has no 'intention of heading towards any Church institution only towards God and where he chooses to lead me'.

Another blog titled 'Tall Skinny Kiwi' written by 'Andrew Jones' touches on similar issues with several familiar names, though it only mentioning the Jesus Prayer specifically in passing.[10] One of the posts by Andrew Jones remarks on the recent popularity of monasticism, particularly Celtic forms, in Emerging Churches and its criticism from within certain areas of Protestantism. A response by Alan expands on this theme:

> I truly believe this monastic thing has gone beyond some kind of post-modern fadishness. I think we're tapping into something very deep and old and established. We may not be following all the traditional 'rules' of how it's 'supposed' to happen, but if you look at the various monastic movements over the centuries, you'll likely find, neither did they.

Mark Berry writes of his exploration of the concept of '(po)modern-monasticism' but admits that he does '"worry" that a lot of what looks like monasticism is about me i.e. consumer spiritual direction/space/retreat and reflection and not about humility, community (comm. first me second) and rule and rhythm'. In another post, Thomas Brown contributes his own view that it is 'very important to tap into the folks who've worked this thing down through the ages. Then, innovate off of that – carefully'. Again, a potential danger is pointed out when Phil Smith writes, 'I think the danger

of this new fascination with monasticism is that it could become pop, like wearing a WWJD band, when traditionally I don't think that was ever the case'.

Another post by Joe (likely the same Joe as in the 'Way Out West' blog) criticizes this popularity by bringing up the claims of selective appropriation and misappropriation of 'Celtic Heritage' by Donald Meek as well as Meek's criticisms over the repackaging of this heritage for display and the benefit of 'the market, the consumers'. Joe later criticizes the term 'new monasticism':

> 'Everything old is new again', especially in meeting of the evangelical Protestant with the Celtic Church. What is it about the ancient Celtic Church that is so old-school that you've got to 'Neo' it? [. . .] 'Neo,' I take it means the negation of these unsavoury elements and the taking up of all that's left. But then, what's left? The accoutrements.

In his explanation of '"How to avoid faddish monkery" in a nutshell', Joe quotes a conversation between Fr. Thomas Hopko and 'Canadian Emergents':

> You can't imitate or mimic or mock the Church. You're either in it, or you're not. And Orthodoxy isn't a set of texts or a bunch of pictures – it's a living, organic community that has texts and icons, and it's that living community where the power is that you need, and if you're not in that community, you can have the accoutrements, but you don't have the power . . . You couldn't just imitate it, you had to be in it. Because it was a historical community, in history, that you had to enter into – just like the Gentiles had to be grafted to Israel.

Joe then describes

> A personal pet peeve based on 3 years of interaction with various Emerging/Emergent types: I pray that I will never again hear or read the words, 'I'm standing on the shoulders of giants' in a false-humble sense from any more Emergents in reference to their heightened spiritual stature (self-perceived) as a result of some 'borrowing' of the words or works of some spiritual giant of the past (usually an Orthodox or Roman Catholic Saint). Rather, they should be learning at the feet of these Saints.

Responding to these posts, 'joeturner' complains that Joe implies 'that truth only resides in the Orthodox church. The question is not whether or not Andrew (and the rest of the emergent church) is in communion with Constantinople, but whether he is following the will of God'. After several threats by Andrew Jones to block Joe from the forum for proselytizing and spamming the forum with long quotes, Caroline expresses concern 'about some of the "you're in or you're out" ideas of my own tradition, evangelicalism. I certainly don't want it replaced by people who say you've either got to take ALL the Gaelic origins or 8th C celtic christianity or none'. Caroline does not want to 'give it [monasticism] lordship over that walk [with Jesus]', but values that it can provide her with 'new language tools to work with, new ways-of-seeing to provide wisdom and new values to shake me up a little'. Returning to more familiar territory, she says,

> I don't see the need to take all Orthodox practices in order to benefit from the 'Jesus Prayer'. Am I a magpie Christian? a pic-&-mix Christian? Does that mean I'm illogical at times? I'm sure it does, but as I've got eternity to explore infinity I'm pretty at ease that any silly detours I take are in Christ's company and in partnership with loving friends who will nudge me; that is enough.

Joe replies to the reference in the post by Caroline on using the Jesus Prayer by claiming, 'one can certainly benefit from praying this wonderfully scriptural prayer but can one FULLY benefit without getting with the PROGRAM?' He insists he is

> glad that Emergents are starting to examine this pillar [of the Church] and to make parts of it their own. Please don't misunderstand my intention in my posts. It is not even possible to broach the subject of Church History, monasteries, sacraments and the like with 99 percent of the evangelical Protestants out there.

He continues:

> Emerging/Emergents are the ones that have come into our territory (frontier territory for most of them). Our desire is not to snatch away 'what's ours' from those who would partake of our 'treasure', but we're trying to figure out how to give these explorers MORE of our treasure so that they can FULLY benefit from the riches of the Church.

Joe finishes this post by speaking of his own parish, where

> 99% of our converts have been from evangelical Protestants who have started an 'Emergent' journey of their own and have EmergED from Protestantism. Emerging/Emergent is a 'conversation' and not a 'movement' according to its leadership. I'm praying that this conversation will turn into an actual movement akin to labor leading to EMERGENCE out of Protestantism (and the Protestant method) into something Else.

The above discussions highlight several reoccurring themes in accounts of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm that underlie and play a major role in controversies between such accounts. Three of these fundamental themes, authority, tradition, and appropriation, will be addressed more widely in the next three chapters. The themes will be addressed within more general theoretical debates, which will place the current book into a wider academic setting and relate its topic to the broader field of Religious Studies.

Chapter 6

Authority

In the last two chapters, several overarching themes stand out as the backdrops upon which specific issues play out. The first of these that will be considered is the theme of authority. Central to the point of the present work is the claim that many of the differences between accounts of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm have been caused by differing structures of authority. This can be partly explained by the geographical shift of these practices into new settings with diverging conceptions of authority. Another factor at work is a general shift in the interpretation of authority within various settings. The figure of the spiritual guide and its role in the transmission of the practices from local to global settings also has important implications regarding this theme. These notions of a geographical shift into new settings and the shift of interpretation within settings bring with them a host of terms and issues related to authority. Among these are modes of transmission, globality and locality and subjectivization. This chapter will explore these and other related issues in more depth and subsequent chapters will deal with two other primary themes: tradition and appropriation. Examining the themes in more depth will involve probing the relevance of several theoretical models, thus linking the current topic to larger conceptual issues that relate to a number of other contexts.

One theory regarding authority that is pertinent to the present discussion is the subjectivization thesis found in *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality* (2005). In this monograph, Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead put forth the argument that a general cultural trend referred to as subjectivization is having a huge effect on today's religious landscape. In fact, the authors claim that this thesis explains the simultaneous and superficially contrary trends of secularization and sacrilization in Western culture, or the growth of some religious forms and decline of others.[1] They see subjectivization as the 'the defining cultural development of modern western culture' (5), which is crucial to understand in order to explain, and potentially rectify, much of the confusion within academia

regarding secularization and sacrilization (9–10). Heelas and Woodhead conclude that this trend is in fact the central factor in both secularization and sacrilization and predict that as the number of people affected by this subjective turn increases, it will become increasingly likely that these people will choose to be affiliated with a type of religious practice that is subjectivized as opposed to less subjectivized alternatives.

The concept of subjectivization portrayed in *The Spiritual Revolution* refers to a shift from a life-as mode of living, or life lived according to prescribed roles, duties and external sources of authority and meaning, towards a mode of subjective-life, which they describe as being dictated primarily by one's own internal authority and subjective experience (2). The authors cite Charles Taylor's notion of 'the massive subjective turn of modern culture' and go on to make this the primary principle in their own theory of subjectivization (Heelas and Woodhead 2005: 2). Such a turn involves a tectonic shift in values, where the source of authority and significance for living one's life becomes internalized to a point at which the 'subjectivities of each individual become a, if not the, unique source of significance, meaning and authority' (3–4). At the subjective-life end of the spectrum 'the "ought's" of life-as threaten not only my values but my very existence' (4). In a footnote, Heelas and Woodhead comment that this threat is the reason for the importance of individual freedom to subjective-life mentality, though they claim that this freedom is 'a facilitating rather than a primary value' since the thing of '"ultimate" value is the unique subjective-self' (159f.).

In their use of the terms life-as and subjective-life, Heelas and Woodhead hope to 'sharpen up the distinction between "religion" and "spirituality" by distinguishing between life-as religion and subjective-life spirituality', with religion endorsing life-as values and spirituality endorsing subjective-life values (5). The authors make some efforts to address the problematic and restrictive nature of the dichotomy between the subjective-life/spirituality/holistic milieu and the life-as/religion/congregational domain. They note the occasional conflict between the popular uses of the terms religion and spirituality and their own use, as, for example, when a life-as congregation applies the term spirituality to itself (5–6).[2] Though the authors admit of some overlap between religion and spirituality, this claim would run counter to the sense in which they use the terms (5–6). Still, on many occasions they display a recognition that life-as and subjective-life are not mutually exclusive and that life-as forms of belief often contain their own form of life-as spirituality, with some even being centrally concerned with cultivating subjective-life (6, 13, 64–5). Woodhead and Heelas also admit

that there can never be a complete absence of subjective-life or life-as since both are fundamental to how individuals function in society (4).

Additionally, they do not imagine the shift has been restricted to a one-way flow towards subjective-life and they describe movements that appear to return to the values of life-as as counter-culture (123–4). This fact obviously prevents any simple correlation between exposure to the subjective turn and adaptation of a thoroughly subjective-life perspective. Despite these ambiguities, the authors maintain that a meaningful distinction and typology of life-as/religion and subjective-life/spirituality should be upheld. Relying on their research which suggests that 'the congregational domain and holistic milieu constitute two largely separate and distinct worlds', they seem to find enough evidence for an overwhelming shift from external to internal authority and enough dissimilarity between the ways of life which appeal to these authorities to call for such a distinction (32).

While the two modes of life are not said to be mutually exclusive, they are still described as having 'a deep incompatibility', with each finding 'only danger in the other' (4). Any amount of attention to an individual's inner life which does exist in life-as settings always exists and functions according to an external authority which structures it (14, 31). In the authors' terms, subjective-life is never fully 'authorised' in these settings but is instead 'normativised' or 'channeled into conformity with supra-individual norms' (14). In fully subjectivized life, however, it is only inner experience, such as 'states of consciousness, states of mind, memories, emotions, passions, sensations, bodily experiences, dreams, feelings, inner conscience and sentiments' which is the final arbiter of one's life (3). Thus any other authority is subject to ultimate evaluation by this inner authority as being either in accord with one's experience and thus ringing true, or as being opposed to it and regarded as an artificial imposition considered detrimental to individual well-being. Despite its recent growth, much of the subjectively-focused congregational domain is considered to be peripheral to the life-as realm (64–5).

Instead of understanding subjectivization in relation to the separate domains of spirituality/subjective-life and religion/life-as, with all subjectivized life-as or normative subjective-life seen as anomalous, it is most useful to approach this process and the various responses to it as tendencies or emphases. By avoiding the simple dichotomy of spirituality vs religion as a starting point, we can look at the subjective turn as it operates in particular settings without presupposing that subjective-life is more natural in one domain and life-as in another. The authors seem to recognize the variety of approaches to subjective experience within the life-as setting, but regard

this mixture as somehow peripheral, counterintuitive, or misleading. Assuming that these are all incomplete versions of subjectivization, they assume the subjective-life ideal of subjectivity as complete freedom from all external authority.

One primary methodological aim in *The Spiritual Revolution* is to seriously consider the views and statements of all those involved in the research. This is made clear in a footnote where the authors counter the argument 'that the holistic milieu actually functions in a "formative" or life-as way' (160n.). They respond to this idea by stating that 'whatever the truth of this argument, our characterization of the holistic milieu in this chapter has relied on what we know to be the case: namely, what the participants have to say' (160n.). Instead, it appears there is some inconsistency in their treatment of these types. Their commitment to truly represent the claims of participants does not, in fact, seem to be supported by all of the characterizations made by the authors.

One quote describes the life-as mode as emphasizing 'a transcendent source of significance and authority to which individuals must confirm at the expense of the cultivation of their unique subjective-lives' and the subjective-life as emphasizing 'inner sources of significance and authority and the cultivation or sacrilization of unique subjective-lives' (6). Though those within the holistic domain may be more comfortable with this definition, it is unlikely that any of those interviewed from the congregational domain would give such a self-description. This seems to take on the perspective of subjective-life and neglect the life-as voice by framing the issue according to subjective-life standards. While life-as is 'at the expense' of attention to subjective-life, subjective-life appears not to be at the expense of anything. It may be true that those with subjective-life positions would see life-as religion in this way, but it is equally true that an individual with a life-as perspective would likely claim that the subjective-life view does come at the expense of something.

The same sentiment is found in another passage:

> The 'trick' which such congregations play is to offer subjective enhancement and cultivation in terms that can make sense to a subjectivized culture, but to insist that this comes not through reliance on one's inner resources but through submission to the higher authority of God, Christ, the Bible and congregational instruction. (19)

Calling such a combination of cultivation of inner life within the context of external authorities a 'trick' seems to be, at best, an assertion that the two

do not function naturally together and, at worst, a value-judgment which seems to clearly run against the aim of truthfully representing 'what the [presumably all] participants have to say' (160). One reason this could be viewed as a trick is because it complicates the situation by blending the roles of subjective-life and life-as, thus threatening the typological boundaries on which the study depends. This statement betrays a certain understanding of subjectivity and freedom that defines subjectivity as opposed to external authority and sees complete subjectivity as the absence of all external constraint. It is not only the value of subjectivity that can vary significantly between settings, but also its very definition. When carefully examined, the authors' understanding of subjectivity appears to be much closer to what they would consider a subjective-life perspective.[3] The freedom from all external constraint and other subjective-life values are spoken of as positive values as opposed to the negative understanding of life-as religion as constraining freedom and denying subjective-life values. The definition of terms such as freedom and subjectivity are not reflected upon as revealing a particular understanding that is relevant to the topic.

In light of these factors noted about the equation of subjective-life with spirituality and life-as with religion, it would seem wise to simply drop the popular distinction between spirituality and religion from the discussion and more finely tune an understanding of subjectivization in its various forms. Instead, a more suitable approach would involve careful application of the concept of subjectivization to various settings, acknowledging the fact that it can take various forms. In other words, normativized subjectivization should be considered on its own terms, not only as a stop along the way to fully authorized subjectivization. By clearing up these terminological presuppositions and adding a level of detail to their use, the idea of subjectivization becomes less problematic and potentially helpful.

An understanding of subjectivization should accommodate the idea that what Heelas and Woodhead consider full subjectivization is only one instance of the subjective turn and is based on a particular understanding of the subject and its relationship to the rest of society in which the ultimate source of authority and meaning rests in the autonomous individual (5). Here, subjectivization is understood not as a simple, unified turn, but as reaction to the important cultural value of subjectivity by emphasis or de-emphasis on certain conceptions of the self in its relations to other selves and societies. This use also refers to the ways in which each conception is presented and sustained: the techniques of their propagation. In this understanding, subjectivization does not itself have a natural affinity with subjective-life/spirituality, but it is understood and negotiated in various

ways by different groups, often using conflicting strategies. If subjectivization continues to become increasingly prevalent in the United Kingdom and beyond, as Heelas and Woodhead suggest, it seems likely that communities, institutions and congregations will continue to find room or make room for subjectivity in unique ways.

The relevance of the subjectivization thesis to the current topic is its concern with the shift in authority from external to internal in the form of the ideal types of life-as spirituality and subjective-life religion. Heelas and Woodhead's presentation does not fully do justice to the range and detail of strategies geared to accommodate subjectivity within tradition, but it is a promising step. While their discussion of tradition's role in authority may be limited, it is helpful in teasing out a more sufficient account of how authority plays a role in the transmission and interpretation of the Jesus Prayer. This account will continue to develop as subsequent chapters assess other similarly important themes. The next of these is the nature, use and understanding of tradition.

Max Weber was one early theorist who saw the importance of the way a tradition or practice is transmitted. His distinction between types of authority corresponds to a distinction between the modes of transmission that underlie them. Weber describes different bases of authority – charismatic, traditional and bureaucratic – that each legitimizes the authority of an order in their own unique way. Charismatic authority works by virtue of an affective response to the special qualities of a leader or prophet. Traditional authority legitimizes an order based on the order's declared changelessness. Bureaucratic authority is legitimized by the utility of an order for social control (Weber 1947: 130). The progression from charismatic to traditional to bureaucratic authority is part of a process that Weber terms rationalization. The personal charisma of a religion's founder is first systematized into writing in an attempt to safeguard the purity of this charisma and then these writings are propagated as the basis for education of a developing group of religious functionaries (91). Weber saw all religions as having gone through the process of rationalization from charismatic movement into a canonical religion where charisma becomes depersonalized and literary (92). Written transmission becomes increasingly essential to a tradition or practice as it becomes more rationalized.

For Weber, the increasing rationalization of religion is closely related to increasing social complexity. As specialization occurs, people are no longer in constant face-to-face contact; thus, control must move beyond informal, direct interaction and become codified in law and formal rules and procedures. Challenges to tradition usually come from a charismatic prophet

who makes statements regarding the tradition which he or she claims has 'always been valid though not yet rightly known, or that it had been obscured for a time and was now being restored to its rightful place' (131). These ideal-types are admitted by Weber to be just that, *ideal*, and any example in the world is inevitably located somewhere on a spectrum in which a combination of types of authority is operative. Keeping this in mind, we can see how these ideal-types can be distinguished by their relationship to the rationalization and systematization of religion, which serves to propagate and regulate a growing religious movement (Bendix 1960: 91).

Using Weber's interpretative framework, one could say experiences of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm were transmitted first orally, through personal charisma and then gradually through literature as they became rationalized into a canonical tradition. The inevitable result of this was the potential for the tradition to become depersonalized and literary, and to lose its initial motivating charisma, resulting in the necessity of new strategies, such as an appeal to changelessness, to maintain the tradition. This model overlooks what is often the enduring purpose, and occasional result, of the rationalization and systemization of religion: recapturing an initial charisma and repeatedly bringing it to life at the individual level. Despite this limitation, the concepts of rationalization and types of authority are important souvenirs to take from Weber's thought.

The question of how the practices of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm spread outside of monasteries and into the wider world is closely connected to the medium of their transmission. This was seen in the importance of oral and literary transmission in the historical course plotted in Chapter 3. One of the factors that precipitated the global spread of the practice was their increasingly mediated nature; as they were transmitted by increasingly less direct means, the practices became unfastened from the authority of those who controlled them. While Marshall McLuhan's forceful maxim, 'the medium is the message', may overstate the present point, the medium of transmission of the practices now explored has certainly been important to the nature of what is transmitted, how it is received and by whom (McLuhan 1963). This topic is touched on by several other theorists, such as Walter Ong, and these theoretical models will help to analyse how the medium affects the content and reception of transmission.

McLuhan's colleague Walter Ong has several helpful insights on the importance of different modes of transmission. Ong's primary focus in *Orality and Literacy* is on how oral transmission differs from written communication, how orality underlies all writing and how oral communication

has been transformed by writing (Ong 2002). The author calls attention to Plato's reservations about 'writing, as a mechanical, inhuman way of processing knowledge, unresponsive to questions and destructive of memory', also noting Saussure's warnings about the 'usefulness, shortcomings and dangers' of writing (Ong 2002: 24, 5). According to Ong, 'writing fosters abstractions that disengage knowledge from the arena where human beings struggle with one another' while, 'by keeping knowledge embedded in the human lifeworld, orality situates knowledge within a context of struggle [. . .] not simply to store knowledge but to engage others in verbal and intellectual combat' (43–4). In what Ong calls 'primary oral cultures' that do not rely heavily on written transmission, tradition is passed along 'by discipleship, which is a kind of apprenticeship' (9).

Ong's critique of the overlooked transformation of the nature of knowledge by writing is polemical and overly general at times, but he brings up several important points that are pertinent to the current topic. For Ong, 'writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for "objectivity", in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing' as opposed to an oral setting where the narrator, audience and characters are bound together (46). He says 'a written text is basically unresponsive. If you ask a person to explain his or her statement, you can get an explanation; if you ask a text, you get back nothing except the same, often stupid, words which called for your question in the first place' (79). The agonistic character of verbal interaction in predominately oral cultures can be explained by the fact that 'the written word cannot defend itself as the natural spoken word can: real speech and thought always exist essentially in a context of give-and-take between real persons' (79). Ong describes writing as establishing 'context-free' language or 'autonomous' discourse, 'which cannot be directly questioned or contested as oral speech can be because written discourse has been detached from its author' and has adopted a fixed point-of-view (79, 135). Simultaneously, the medium of print has, for Ong, 'created a new sense of the private ownership of words' that in turn generates 'resentment at plagiarism' and a 'drift in human consciousness towards greater individualism' (131). Ong's insight into orality and literacy directly concerns the question of the role of modes or media of transmission. Ong concludes by considering how interactive electronic media have reinvigorated the dialogical element while retaining print's literary character. This renewal of dialogue is noticeable in the agonistic nature of some of the online discussions of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, which highlights the interpretative gaps created by their transmission into the electronic medium.

One issue at work in almost all of the descriptions and discussions of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm is the role of the spiritual guide in the practices. The practices in question began as direct oral traditions that were first controlled and defined within the fairly narrow context in which they developed. As the practices left these original settings through their written and diasporic dissemination, they have come loose of the elder-disciple relationship and gradually emerged from the supervision of ecclesiastical and interpretative authorities. One result of this has been the potential for depersonalization brought about by the loss of oral transmission through spiritual guidance between an elder and disciple. This relationship is often described as being very personal in nature, with guidance being tailored to each person based on their life history and specific disposition (Louth 2003: 358). As a result of their publication and spread, the practices have become, at least in some cases, primarily transmitted through writing. The loss of the personal and dialogical communication involved in spiritual direction, combined with the deregulation of authority this may enable, causes much concern, as we have seen, among more traditional interpreters.

Most Orthodox views that were encountered in textual research tend to emphasize the absolute necessity of this figure when one intends to use the Jesus Prayer in any methodical or intensive way. In fact, these views usually insist on having a guide even when not specifically using the Jesus Prayer; the spiritual guide is said to be essential for anyone attempting to lead a prayer life in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. One's spiritual father may also be one's confessor, but the role typically has a further significance. Rather than having a purely sacramental role as confessor, the spiritual guide gives everyday advice for living and spiritual instruction to his or her spiritual children, which involves a close relationship developed over a long period of time.

The perspectives of Perennialists on the Jesus Prayer frequently show a concern for the importance of having a spiritual father. This seems to be related to a general emphasis on the initiatic aspect of hesychastic practices and their esoteric transmission from master to disciple. Some Perennialists wonder whether every Orthodox Christian should use the prayer and whether all can reach the same heights of prayer. Instead, these heights are usually thought of as belonging to the higher order of metaphysics, which surpasses the realm of faith and religion. The necessity of a spiritual guide is a claim that Perennialists not only accept, but upon which they usually adamantly insist. Perennialist sources also stress the danger of self-delusion that accompanies a lack of spiritual guidance.

The need for a spiritual guide is seen as less essential, or less formal, in other settings. The contemplative turning inward of the Emerging Churches against the grain of their Evangelical roots appears to drive their interest in the Jesus Prayer. Additionally, many Emergent Churches are embracing the idea of monasticism and inner prayer based on the prominent Ancient-Future theme. This theme expresses a desire to return to ancient sources while seeking to avoid the perceived pitfalls of history and to bring these ancient sources to bear on contemporary culture insofar as they are relevant. One of these pitfalls appears to be the authority and power games that mark both institutional churches and the formal, institutional relationship involved in spiritual direction. The figure of a spiritual guide functions to connect an individual's thinking and behaviour to a shared and agreed-upon theory and praxis, aligning the individual's interpretation to an authorized group interpretation. The concepts of authority and tradition are thus central to the issue of spiritual guidance, which is part of one particular mode of the transmission of tradition.

The transmission of religious practices also involves the issue of globality and locality, since the practices have gone from Orthodox monasteries, which are relatively local settings, to give a specific example, settings that can be considered global in comparison. This is based on a particular understanding in which the role of authority is central to the concepts of the local and the global. Settings that can be called local are often characterized by a reduced number of competing and alternative authorities and a correspondingly comprehensive role played by a single tradition. In such a setting, tradition has an all-encompassing role, serving to legitimate and maintain the current authority, to guide one's decisions in life, to make sense of the world and to help individuals form a sense of self. Additionally, in this context the authoritative role is played by a single tradition or by relatively few. This is in contrast to a global setting where plurality in competing voices of authority forces tradition into a more limited role as a tool for the formation of the self and the meaningful ordering of the world. In this way tradition loses its authoritative and normative function.[4] This is not to say that tradition disappears in global settings, but rather that traditions begin to have different roles as more of them coexist and compete for authority.

Monasteries often are, by their very nature, attempts to shut out the plurality of views from the outside world in order to make better progress in one's spiritual life. This is done by maintaining a clear source of authority in spiritual guidance, church tradition and authoritative writings and by giving an all-inclusive role to tradition. In other words, rather than considering

tradition to be an optional tool for creating a sense of self and an ordered world, tradition is also made to act authoritatively and normatively. If any place can be called local in this sense, it is a monastery. This is the case even when the restriction of sources of authority and the expansion of tradition are a self-conscious response to plurality.[5]

If monasteries can be considered local and other settings can be called global, having multiple authorities and a non-normative and non-authoritative tradition, then what happens when a practice from one setting makes its way into the other? A consideration of the more general discussion of globalization and religion aids in beginning to address this question. Several theorists such as Roland Robertson and Zygmunt Bauman have popularized the term glocalization to refer to the dialectical process whereby goods or practices travel between global and local settings and adapt to each (Robertson 1992, 1995; Bauman 1998). Globalization occurs when a good or practice from a particular setting becomes global and localization when a global good is adapted to local conditions. As the process of cultural transferral is never a simple matter of movement in one of these directions, the combined process is referred to as glocalization. Bauman describes this as 'the intimate connection between the ostensibly world-wide availability of cultural tokens and increasingly diversified, territorial uses made of them' (Bauman 1998: 42–3). What is thought of as global was once local and, likewise, the global always contains within it the local. Thus, Bauman prefers the term glocalization to the ideologically-laden alternative of globalization (40).

While some cultural products are shifting from a global cultural market and being reconfigured to serve the interests of a local market, other local practices are being imported into global markets, often being reconfigured to satisfy the needs of global consumers. The qualities of globality and locality are often used as marketing tools for products as well. In the case of localization where a local cultural product is integrated into a larger market, the product's local, indigenous or exotic qualities may be emphasized in order to satisfy consumer tastes, creating an image which may have limited or no correspondence to the original product in its local context. Robertson states, 'globalization has involved the reconstruction, in a sense the production, of "home", "community" and "locality" ' and thus the local is an aspect of globalization rather than its counterpoint (Robertson 1995: 30). In other words, the move towards locality is often a conscious reaction to globality and is thus still operating under its influence. While this is often true, it does not prevent global settings from being distinguishable from local settings in their understandings and roles of tradition and authority.

The proliferation of authorities and competing traditions in global settings brings with it a proliferation of choices. As Bauman puts it,

> The global markets of commercial goods and information make the selectivity of absorption unavoidable – while the way the selections are made tends to be locally, or communally, selected to provide new symbolic markers for the extinct and resurrected, freshly invented or as yet postulated only, identities. (1998, 43)

Bauman and several others see in this scenario, not equal cultural trading partners, but an unequal relationship where 'free choice for some is cruel fate for some others' (1998, 45).[6] These ideas of locality and globality will later be expanded as they relate to the consequences of the flow of cultural practices across global and local boundaries.

Chapter 7

Tradition

The theme of authority is often closely linked with tradition, which is the focus of the present chapter. The variety of ways in which tradition is understood, theorized about, and employed is at the heart of this chapter and this will be addressed by first exploring theories of tradition, followed by an examination of the concept of tradition in relation to several issues specific to the present topic, such as the Jesus Prayer as a tool for the contemplative renewal of Christianity or as a tool for ecumenism. This will involve considering ways in which the practices in question are popularly conceived in relation to tradition and various depictions of how the practices relate to the wider Orthodox tradition and to other religious practices and traditions.

There are countless detailed accounts of particular traditions, many of which contain theoretical reflections on the tradition in question, but, surprisingly, considerations of tradition as a theoretical category are relatively uncommon. One of the first academic figures to give an important place to tradition in theoretical discussion was Max Weber, whose ideas were touched on in the last chapter. Weber considered tradition to be one of several ways of legitimating the authority of an order, in this case by claiming 'it has always been done this way' (Weber 1947: 130). While anthropologists working in the first half of the twentieth century also dealt with questions regarding tradition and its role in societies, one of the first major scholarly contributions to the topic comes relatively recently in Edward Shils' sociological study, *Tradition* (1981). Shils is critical of the outcome predicted by Weber and others that traditions 'would be obliterated by the invincible advance of rationalization' (10). Shils highlights the importance of tradition, or what is handed down, in the maintenance of society, but also stresses the role of questioning and defying tradition as a central part of the process of tradition itself. The notion of tradition as a process or balance between preservation and innovation is a key theme in many works on the subject and will be seen in several of the theories

considered in this chapter. Shils' study frames much of the subsequent work on tradition and highlights themes that will be of relevance throughout this chapter.[1]

Shils points out that frequently in contemporary society the creative fruit of tradition is often admired and respected while the role of tradition as a normative model for action is seen as useless and burdensome (3). Similarly, he notes the fact that a 'sense of identity and a sense of filiation' with a tradition are not equivalent to the 'actual reception of a tradition' (14). Shils thus hints at distinctions within the concept of tradition that relate to the way tradition is understood, related to and put to use. He also touches on the dynamics of textual transmission and the reinterpretation of 'constellations of symbols, clusters of images [which] are received and modified' when they are transmitted or even within their original setting (13). The relation of the static essence of a tradition to the mutable attributes of a tradition is discussed as a way of seeing the continuity in traditions. All of these topics (the variety in strategies of defining what is essential and what is peripheral, textual transmission and reinterpretation, and the politics of tradition and identity) are also important issues in the struggle over interpretations of the Jesus Prayer and many are taken up and elaborated by subsequent scholars.

Another seminal text on tradition is the collection of essays entitled *The Invention of Tradition*, edited and introduced by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983). In their introduction, Hobsbawm and Ranger describe the phenomenon of invented traditions that frequently occurs 'when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which "old" traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable' (4). These invented traditions claim a connection with a certain past but their continuity through time is described by the authors as 'largely fictitious' and as an attempt to 'dress up [. . .] as antiquity' (2, 5). Responding to the constant flux of the modern world by claiming that certain parts of it are unchanging, they adapt old models to new uses for which they were not created. Hobsbawm and Ranger also stress that even groups that are commonly considered traditionalist by their members and others are often marked by breaks in continuity over time and by selective memory (7). They compare the pragmatic function of custom to the impracticality of tradition: when what was once a rational custom becomes fixed despite the changing circumstances that surround it, the custom becomes a tradition. Thus tradition carries with it the connotation of being opposed to rationalization as it is understood by Weber. In other words, for Hobsbawm and Ranger, there is no room for rationality in a

traditional explanation, which is, instead, a stubborn resistance to change and an insistence on doing things the way they were done before for that reason alone. This understanding of tradition seems as one-dimensional as an evolutionary theory of religion, but, fortunately, the concept is fleshed out by other authors who are discussed at a later point in the chapter.

Hobsbawm and Ranger's claims naturally beg the question of whether there are any traditions that are not invented traditions and, if not, whether there are different degrees of invention. The authors do momentarily address this point and, perhaps surprisingly, claim 'the strength and adaptability of genuine traditions is not to be confused with the "invention of tradition"' (8). They go on to note several differences between invented traditions or 'pseudo-communities' and 'genuine traditions' (10). One distinguishing factor between 'old and invented practices' is that the former 'were specific and strongly binding social practices, [while] the latter tended to be quite unspecific and vague as to the nature of the values, rights and obligations of the group membership they inculcate' (10). Thus, the two are set apart by their degrees of normativity and the explicitness of their social functions. This characterization hints at the role of authority in these two types of tradition but does not go much further. The authors mention the possible limits of new traditions in adapting pre-existing material but do not go into much depth on what these limitations may be (7). One wishes Hobsbawm and Ranger would go into more detail on how 'invented' and 'authentic' traditions are to be distinguished, differing strategies of establishing traditions and authenticity, and what are the limits of tradition's flexibility, but at this point other authors step in to address these concerns.

Another important source for further developing an account of tradition is the perspective of Danièle Hervieu-Léger (1999, 2000). As she focuses on the structuring and restructuring of religious groups based on claims of belonging to authentic traditions, in some ways her thesis is closely linked to the theories of Hobsbawm and Ranger (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). In *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, Hervieu-Léger creates a working definition of religion as 'an ideological, practical and symbolic system through which consciousness, both individual and collective, of belonging to a particular chain of belief is constituted, maintained, developed and controlled' (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 82). The reference to and enactment of the chain of belief are key elements in her definition. Hervieu-Léger's contribution is highlighting the importance of the concept of memory, which will help to characterize various interpretations and uses of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm.

Hervieu-Léger addresses many of the concerns that are left more or less untouched by Heelas and Woodhead (Heelas and Woodhead, 2005). She speaks of the 'individualization and subjectivization' of belief and relationship with the past, thus dealing with similar issues as Heelas and Woodhead, but with more attention on how groups attempt to claim connection with the authority and the past to legitimate themselves. She refers to 'the erosion of structured systems of representation [. . .] linked to precise social practices and developed by clearly identifiable social groups' (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 30). This brings attention to an element largely missing from *The Spiritual Revolution*, namely the constructive role of the 'structured systems' of life-as tradition, which fully subjectivized perspectives must somehow fill. Her account looks at how religion functions in societies that 'no longer asked established religion to provide a framework for social organization' (33). Religions in societies which have no need for this role become 'fragmented across an array of specialized spheres and institutions' and dependent on the needs, preferences and aesthetics of individuals and groups who construct their own systems of religious meanings within these societies (33).

Tradition is a concept that finds its way into nearly every part of *Religion as a Chain of Memory* and it is one of the overarching principles of Hervieu-Léger's theories. The author describes traditions as implying a 'relationship with the past' which involves the transmission of codes of individual and social conduct constrained by this past (84). For Hervieu-Léger, the primary purpose of tradition is not only continuity in a collective sense, but also in the identities of individuals that have often been threatened by 'the unrestrained globalization of social phenomena and the extreme fragmentation of individual experience' in the contemporary world (166). This has resulted in the formation of a type of religion that is 'the reconstructed form of tradition within modernity' or a process of re-traditionalization (85). Though this process is described as moving towards 'the gradual predominance of movement over order, and of human autonomy over heteronomy', Hervieu-Léger in no way sees traditional and modern societies as self-enclosed, stressing that 'the opposition between them is not absolute' (85). Rather, 'the dynamics of each overlap' (85). She also recognizes that a proponent of tradition will see tradition differently than a more subjectivized counterpart; the first will understand it as 'an immutable, necessary order that pre-exists both individuals and groups' and the second will recognize ultimate order 'as proceeding from the individual will, itself held to pre-exist the tie that binds society together' (86, 85). Here, tradition is understood to have dynamic 'creative power' to

those who look to it for authority and it is in fact defined by this power: it is 'the authority attributed to the past to settle the problems of the present' (86). In its exploration of tradition, this description is an improvement on the account of tradition from Heelas and Woodhead (2005).

What is most significant about memory and continuity for Hervieu-Léger is not whether or not continuity actually exists in a historically verifiable sense, but whether a group provides a sense of continuity by invoking memory as the 'visible expression of a lineage' (81). Similarly, 'the degree of ancientness confers an extra value on tradition, but it is not what initially establishes its social authority' (87). Instead, 'what matters most is that the demonstration of continuity is capable of incorporating even the innovations and reinterpretations demanded by the present' (87). This approach avoids the authentic/inauthentic dichotomy of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). In other words, it is the very fact that a group invokes the past that brings it under the scope of Hervieu-Léger's definition of religion and understanding of tradition. Still, the strategies for invoking the past to structure the present can differ depending on the conditions in and around a group. In a group that is subjected to changes that threaten to disturb its current balance 'a past is reinvented so as to recreate the true memory of this or that group and [. . .] to re-establish an identity which modernity has placed under threat' (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 142). Speaking of the loss of social memory of tradition, Hervieu-Léger says 'without there being an organized and integrated social memory such reconstruction [of society] takes place in an entirely fragmented way' (142).

One strategy of dealing with the loss of such an 'organized and integrated social memory' is the 'deliberate choice of invoking the authority of a tradition, by becoming incorporated into a continuing lineage' (165). Hervieu-Léger refers to this as a 'post-traditional way of constructing self-identity' which is a 'fundamental reworking of the relationship with tradition' (165, 167). She claims that the 'invisible religion' described by Thomas Luckmann 'has no need of the mediation of any institution' and makes possible a 'combination of the themes inherited from traditional religions and the modern themes of free expression, self-realization and mobility which correspond to the advent of individualism' (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 34). This 'interlacing of shattered memories [. . .] opens up theoretically limitless possibilities for inventing, patching together and playing with systems of meaning that are capable of "establishing tradition" ' (143, 167). One result is the so-called 'mystico-esoteric cluster that shows a marked ability to assimilate and recycle available knowledge' (33).

Here, being religious in modernity is described as 'not so much knowing oneself begotten as willing oneself so to be' (167). This idea of 'post-traditional religion' that 'defers recognition of a tradition's power of generation to the effectiveness of individual commitment' is strikingly similar to the subjectivization of the previous chapter (166). In the last part of *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, Hervieu-Léger devotes her efforts to addressing the de-institutionalization of meaning which she says 'does not only concern those who assemble their beliefs [. . .], or those who allow the possibility, if not the probability, of their believing' (168). Like Heelas and Woodhead, the author points out that the 'shift in the repository of the truth of belief from the institution to the believer' is also occurring in contexts which are typically considered traditional, where 'religious meaning in their view can only be recognized subjectively', or is authorized by subjectivity (168–9). This is analogous to a type of life-as spirituality or congregational subjective-life, to use the terms of Heelas and Woodhead (2005).

Hervieu-Léger cites several typologies of tradition used by other authors. The first is used by Louis-Marie Chauvet and distinguishes 'traditionalist tradition' and 'traditionalizing tradition', with the second involving how societies reread tradition. She details the three types of tradition by Georges Balandier in more detail: 'fundamental tradition', 'formal tradition', and 'pseudo-tradition'. The first of these is concerned with preserving the content as well as the form of a tradition, while the second, which is 'incompatible with the previous form', emphasizes putting the forms of tradition to use for new purposes. The third type, 'pseudo-tradition', 'corresponds to a tradition that has been refashioned; it occurs in periods of accelerated movement and major upheaval' and 'expresses a dawning disorder' (Hervieu-Léger 2000: 88). Hervieu-Léger acknowledges these types as all being at work in varying degrees in cultures that are 'based on tradition' but she does not take the terms much further than that (89). Anything that may be potentially problematic or useful about such distinctions is left unspoken here.

Religion as a Chain of Memory is a further elaboration of the notion of subjectivization with special emphasis on the construction of a chain of memory in the face of the threats and obstacles of modernity, which links individuals and groups to the past. Hervieu-Léger presents the constructive role of tradition that 'post-traditional' societies attempt to fill. Her model presents a less problematic approach to tradition and subjectivization, though one which is also less predictive and sweeping in nature than that

of Heelas and Woodhead. There may be other points one might take issue with, such as the centrality of 'belief' in her attempts to define religion, or the role of the Durkheimian notion of collective memory, but her focus on the importance of tradition as a tool for legitimization and the sometimes fragmentary construction of self-image is worthy of attention.

Having looked at these theories, we can see that most of the central arguments relating to the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm revolve around differing approaches to tradition based on varying understandings of authority. Tradition can function in different ways according to various social and individual needs and world views. In this case, the same tradition simultaneously can function as authoritative for one group and as non-authoritative for another. Conflicting perspectives often allocate different roles to hesychasm and the Jesus prayer and present divergent understandings of them. While the practices in question may only serve to build an identity for some without being morally or socially binding, others claim that without the authority brought by the entirety of a tradition, the practices are dislocated and function in isolation from a larger coherent world view. The claim that some are 'using' the practices without being fully under the authority of a larger encompassing system is the basis of the question of appropriation, which will be considered in the next chapter.

Michael D. Clark's *The American Discovery of Tradition, 1865–1942* considers the various ways in which several American authors during the period understood and made use of tradition (2005). Clark's introduction, besides providing an excellent bibliography on the subject, contains many of its own insightful comments on tradition. He addresses the flexibility of tradition, claiming that, while tradition 'must contain an element of the authoritative or prescriptive [. . .] beyond a certain degree or rate of change, it seems, tradition ceases to be psychologically or socially effective' (3).

Clark reflects on the distinction between tradition and heritage, considering heritage to be a past that is discovered and embraced for a confirmation of a sense of self or society, rather than for authority or prescription in life (5). Clark voices his dissatisfaction with Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) account of tradition and, using the distinction of heritage and tradition, claims that usually the invention of tradition is actually the invention of heritage, according to his understanding of these terms (5). Clark claims that tradition can also provide a sense of self and society, as does heritage, but it carries an additional normative element and, rather than being lost and rediscovered, is said to be carried and maintained through generations. Even though tradition has become less

authoritative and authoritarian, 'it has been appropriated on many levels as a resource for the enrichment of life' (7). According to Clark, it is the conditions of modern life that have helped to 'reduce traditions to "electives" available to enrich the individual's interests or support his ideology' (4). Clark considers that the rediscovery of tradition in late nineteenth-century America could be a signal of tradition's demise, but also suggests that it could be a reconfiguration or modernization of tradition in which it 'became more eclectic and more often elective, more self-conscious', detached and disembodied from its original local context and rationale (8–9). The first option rests on the assumption that tradition must be unreflective and that awareness of it spoils it, like the awareness of nakedness in Eden (9). Clark views this definition of tradition as one that is overly purist and one that disregards the continuing importance of tradition in the modern world, despite changes in its nature (9).

While modernity promised to liberate the individual from tradition, 'modern self-awareness' instead promises to liberate tradition itself 'as an actively chosen agent in personal and collective endeavors [. . .] for aggrandizement, vindication, transcendence, and enrichment of life' (10). In relation to George Bancroft and Thomas Jefferson, Clark refers to the selective choice of traditions, accompanied by a highly unrealistic and possibly rhetorical denial of indebtedness to the past (13–4). Bancroft's view of the past is described as instrumentalist for its claims to preserve the truths of past traditions but discard what is perceived as 'erroneous and outworn' in them (14). The figures considered in Clark's study were part of a general tendency to 'look to tradition for emblems of their hopes and ideals and for affirmation of values which earlier Americans had sought precisely in liberation from tradition' once it was realized that tradition could either validate or oppose change (15, 17). Clark remarks that, despite the various uses of tradition by these figures, there is a remarkable consistency in the 'core American values' that underlie them and their function as 'not alternatives to those values so much as alternative routes to them' (17).

In his article 'What is a semiotic theory of religion?' Tim Murphy expands on the concept of canon found in Jonathan Z. Smith's book *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* in the chapter entitled 'Sacred Persistence: toward a redescription of canon' (Murphy 2005; Smith 1982). In his chapter, Smith stresses the necessity of an ongoing interpretative relationship between the hermeneutes, or interpreters of a text, and the text that they are interpreting. Smith characterizes this as a relationship between a believer and a canon. This canon is characterized as 'both product of

interpretation and definer of the parameters of interpretation' and is distinguished from lists or catalogues mainly by its closure (Murphy 2006: 70; see Smith 1982: 48). Despite this closure, Smith insists that for the canon to survive there must always be a hermeneute, 'an interpreter whose task it is continually to extend the domain of the closed canon [. . .] *without* altering the canon in the process [. . .] a canon cannot exist without a tradition and an interpreter' (49). Smith stresses the task of the hermeneute as being the development of 'exegetical procedures' that assist in applying a fixed canon to new situations and ease the tension produced 'through extension and through novelty', but do so without changing the canon, or at least not overtly changing it (50).

Regarding this relationship between the canon and the hermeneute, Tim Murphy describes the 'paradoxical and precarious combination of fixed and mutable elements' that are involved in the continuation of a tradition, with the fixed canon as one pole of the dynamic and the creative application of canon to changing circumstances as the other pole (71). For Murphy, 'the perpetuity of the canon, or at least the *appearance* of such perpetuity' continually struggles with 'adaptation via interpretation' in this process (72). This understanding of canonical tradition as a 'dynamic, yet bound process' gives rise to the distinction between conservative and innovative interpretations of a text, with the first tending to 'stay within the bounds of the received tradition' and the second 'claiming to find "the real" meaning in the canon, a meaning which departs from received interpretations' (70, 71). In the second instance, there is an attempt to 'recover the essentially open character of the list or catalog' (Smith 1982: 50). This conception of tradition approaches tradition as the interplay between these two interpretative poles over time.

Murphy also points out that interpreting in this sense 'is also, often simultaneously, to extract an element from a given associative field and graft it onto a particular person, event, thing – there is no limit to what a canonical paradigmatic may be applied' (2006: 72). Murphy claims that this ongoing interpretative act is where 'the fundamental processes of religion live' for Smith (71). In concluding his chapter, Smith names the task that remains to be done as

> an examination of the rules that govern the sharp debates between rival exegetes and exegetical systems in their efforts to manipulate the closed canon [. . .] comparing not so much conclusions as strategies through which the exegete seeks to interpret and translate his received tradition to his contemporaries. (52)

It is my hope that the present project helps address this task by considering the issues at work in various strategies of interpreting and depicting the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm.

Murphy and Smith help to clarify a way in which interpretations can be distinguished based on their conservative or innovative approaches to canons, rather than the more qualitative assessment based on authenticity or invention (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Their considerations can also be applied to the study of tradition since tradition can be understood as related or somewhat analogous to canon. These poles of conservation and innovation in interpretation can be understood as two approaches to tradition that often conflict in practice, but are equally part of the process of maintaining and adapting tradition. This understanding of tradition is closely tied to the argument made by Edward Shils in *Tradition* (1981). Murphy and Smith also help to clarify the importance of various strategies of interpretation of a tradition, some of which attempt to reclaim a posited essence that is understood as long-forgotten or obscured, and others which are more concerned with keeping a more extensive tradition more or less intact and allowing any changes to happen develop gradually and imperceptibly. This scheme provides a piece of the overall theoretical framework from which to approach interpretations of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. At this point, several other helpful theories of tradition will be discussed.

Jaroslav Pelikan, the Yale historian of Christian doctrine, wrote a short but very relevant work, *The Vindication of Tradition*, that considers many of the same issues already mentioned, but leaves Pelikan's own personal mark on the discussion (1984). He defines tradition as the living faith of the dead and contrasts this to traditionalism, which he describes as the dead faith of the living (65). Pelikan invokes a distinction made in the eighth and ninth-century Byzantine debate over iconoclasm between an idol, a token and an icon or true image (54–5). The idol asserts itself as an embodiment of what it represents but directs the viewer to itself rather than beyond itself. The token points beyond itself but is an accidental representation that does not embody what it represents. The icon does embody what it represents and directs the viewer not to look at it but rather through it and beyond it to the reality of which it is an embodiment (54–5). Applying this to tradition, Pelikan claims, quite provocatively, that traditionalism approaches tradition as an idol and the denial of tradition approaches tradition as a token (55). He explains this as meaning that when the 'preservation and repetition of past is an end in itself', tradition has become an idol that does not point towards any persisting, living reality even though it is treated as the repository of truth and value (55).

In contrast, a denial of tradition[2] treats tradition, which Pelikan sees as unavoidable in some form or another, as unrelated to truth and value, just as a token is not fundamentally connected to the object of which it is a representation (56). In this approach, once the values and aspirations of a tradition are reached, there is no need to keep the tradition itself, which, to use Pelikan's own analogy, is simply a ladder to reach the window into transcendent, independent values. One of Pelikan's examples of this is John Calvin and others' rediscovery of Augustine (17–18). While some Reformers allied their thinking with Augustine in order to emphasize the connection to their Christian past, Pelikan claims that many disliked his staunch allegiance to Catholic tradition and therefore regarded this aspect of his writing as not reflective of the 'real Augustine'. Thus, there appears an essentializing tendency that seems to be part of the nature of reform, which claims to separate the kernel of revealed truth from the profane accumulations of time.

Pelikan contrasts these approaches to tradition with an approach that sees tradition as a 'true image' that 'does not present itself as coextensive with the truth it teaches, but does present itself as the way that we who are its heirs must follow if we are to go beyond it – through it, but beyond it – to a universal truth that is available only in a particular embodiment' (56). The values and ideals of individuals and societies are seen by Pelikan as embedded in the traditions that gave rise to them and which are necessary to maintain them. A tradition is successful if it successfully addresses the 'deepest intuitions and highest aspirations' of persons and societies, which grow from and are embedded in the traditions themselves (60).

Parallel to this distinction of approaches to tradition is Pelikan's criticism of historical views that either ignore continuity to focus only on disjuncture and change, or see development as basically illusory and only an application of unchangeable authority to outward change (59). In relation to Christian doctrine but also applicable to other canons, Pelikan states, 'development is real but [. . .] it goes on within the limits of identity, which the tradition defines and continues to define' (60). When Pelikan speaks of developments within a tradition as healthy or unhealthy, he understands health as an avoidance of the extremes of traditionalism and implicit and unacknowledged tradition. He describes a healthy development in tradition as one that 'keeps a tradition both out of the cancer ward and out of the fossil museum' (60). Regarding implicit tradition, Pelikan claims that tradition can equally function in the lives of those who do not recognize its presence or have any understanding of it (19–20). It must be confronted if it is to be rejected since a lack of understanding allows for

some unrecognized part of it to potentially remain unnoticed in the background (19). Equally, tradition must be acknowledged and understood in order for one to truly accept it as 'a free and rational person' in a way that does not amount to blind traditionalism (53–4). In relation to Western culture, Pelikan says one must first turn to the formative religious tradition of one's own cultural background since, when looking to other traditions for spiritual sustenance, 'we for our part shall not recognize elsewhere [. . .] unless we have first seen it here' (56–7).

While Pelikan acknowledges a certain truth in the characterization of societies as traditional and post-traditional, he recognizes a problem that many commentators have remarked on: a tendency inherent in this description to obscure so-called post-traditional societies' 'constructive relation to their own traditions' (6). Pelikan gives specific examples of this relation in the concept of *sola scriptura* in the Reformation and in the self-evident truths of Thomas Jefferson and other early American writers (11–12). Speaking of the self-evident truths of the American Constitution, Pelikan suggests that 'such truths, moreover, have often come to appear far less self-evident when they were plucked from those roots and exported to a culture that did not presuppose these implicit values' (12). This statement could be similarly applied to the values presumed in the practice and interpretation of a tradition such as the Jesus Prayer. The history of the practice's publication shows that those who translated, published and disseminated texts on the prayer were aware of the danger that those reading the texts would not have a similar understanding and interpretative framework. Regardless, they were willing to take the risk in order to benefit the wider community, as they claim, but also to preserve the practice and its wider culture context in times of hostility.

Another theory that relates to the relationship of authority and tradition involves the concept of detraditionalization. This concept is explored from a variety of perspectives in the anthology entitled *Detraditionalization* (Heelas et al. 1996). In his introduction, Paul Heelas presents the claim that 'as a working definition, detraditionalization involves a shift of authority: from "without" to "within"' from the authority of traditions to the authority of self (2). Heelas qualifies this by stating that 'although it cannot be denied that detraditionalization has taken place, it is nevertheless possible to argue that claims that we have lurched – or are lurching – into a post-traditional age are highly contestable' (1). The question addressed in most of the essays within this text is not whether detraditionalization has taken place, but to what extent and in what relation to other processes (1). The essays which are included in the collection range from the radical thesis which

'accords a *pre-eminent* role to this shift' to the 'coexistence thesis' in which detraditionalization works '*along-side*, or *together with*, tradition-maintenance, re-traditionalization and the construction of new traditions' (2).

The introduction shows a general recognition of 'the impossibility of purely tradition-informed and purely autonomous modes of being' (11).

Heelas notes that to problematize the idea of full-scale detraditionalization is to suggest that

> 'the traditional' [. . .] is not as tradition-dominated as might be supposed, that 'the modern/post-modern' is not as detraditionalized as might be claimed, and that detraditionalizing processes do not occur in isolation from other processes, namely those to do with tradition-maintenance and the construction – or reconstruction – of traditional forms of life (7).

Heelas also raises the issue of defining tradition: 'Approaching "the traditional" from different points of view – from their own individual, political or socially-defined positions – participants do not see things in the same way. Accordingly, "the traditional" is interpreted in different ways' (8). Both of these observations helpfully amend the problems already noted regarding Heelas and Woodhead's *The Spiritual Revolution* (Heelas and Woodhead 2005). In portraying the coexistence thesis, Heelas points out that the difference between groups in relation to tradition may be the relative importance of 'ideologies of the autonomous self' in each group (Heelas et al. 1996: 9). He raises the possibility that 'certain peoples, for example, have more elaborated ideologies of autonomy than others, or have more opportunities to exercise choice in such matters as religion, marriage or consumption' (11). Several other points that relate to detraditionalization are also mentioned, such as the technologically-assisted acceleration of communication and the commodification of mass consumer culture that could be contributing to this shift of authority (4).

In the same collection, John B. Thompson's essay 'Tradition and Self in a Mediated World' introduces an approach to tradition that can inform the present discussion by describing changes in the nature of tradition and the role that different ways of transmitting traditions play in this change (Thompson 1996). Thompson argues:

> those who use the term 'detraditionalization' generally argue not that traditions have altogether disappeared from the modern world, but that their status has changed in certain ways: they have become less

> taken-for-granted and less secure, as they have become increasingly exposed to the corrosive impact of public scrutiny and debate. (90)

One unique aspect of this essay is its unpacking of tradition's various roles and functions. Thompson distinguishes four aspects of tradition: the hermeneutic aspect, the normative aspect, the legitimating aspect and the identity aspect. By examining the ways in which these various roles interact, he reminds us of the complexity that is often masked behind the misleading simplicity in the typical presentation of tradition as a one-way process in which 'beliefs and practices which were allegedly widespread in the past' are gradually replaced (90). Thompson claims that tradition's hermeneutic aspect, which is a set of background assumptions which help to make sense of the world, and its identity aspect, which forms personal and collective identity and creates a sense of belonging, have not diminished in importance of prevalence in a world that is often characterized as post-traditional (91–3). On the other hand, the legitimating and normative aspects of tradition in which tradition acts as 'support for the exercise of power and authority' and as a 'normative guide for actions and beliefs', have dwindled in importance within settings that are marked by their globality and plurality (92–3). Rather than disappearing, tradition begins to take on a different role for those in a world of multiple and competing views – a global world that encourages personal freedom of choice in selecting traditions.

Because of these changes in the dynamics within tradition, the very nature of tradition 'has been transformed in a crucial way: the transmission of the symbolic materials which comprise traditions have become increasingly detached from social interaction in a shared locale' (94). Thompson claims that

> The decline of traditional authority [legitimating aspect] and the traditional grounding of action [normative aspect] does not spell the demise of tradition but rather signals a shift in its nature and role, as individuals come to rely more and more on mediated and de-localized traditions as a means of making sense of the world [hermeneutic aspect] and of creating a sense of belonging [identity aspect]. (94)

While Thompson uses the language of detraditionalization, it is clear that his theory regarding change and tradition is more akin to a theory of retraditionalization. Recognizing, as he does, the novel use of tradition outside of shared locales, his distinction between aspects and roles of tradition is one more missing piece of the secularization/sacralization puzzle.

Thompson also brings up another important factor in the changing nature of tradition: the media through which it is communicated. Though tradition was originally a matter of face-to-face and local interaction, it has become, more often than not, mediated through its proliferation in written sources and the spread of these sources. The development of new media allows instant access to geographically distant information that can provide the hermeneutic and identity roles that were once primarily supplied by a more coherent local tradition. This process can also unhinge tradition from its original context and make it more widely accessible, which, as Thompson notes, can lead to tension and conflict of interpretation and divergence of meaning (102, 104). In a dialogical two-way flow of information, questions can be posed and objections addressed, as opposed to more mediated interaction, which can often be one-way, indirect, and impersonal on one end (98). There is not a simple equation of unmediated with oral and mediated with written: new electronic media such as the internet has more potential for the two-way flow of information than media such as television and mass printed texts. Although direct transmission has the advantage of being able to better direct and control the spread of a tradition, this can restrain the ease and speed of its spread (99). Weighing the advantages and disadvantages of different media brings us back to the decision by Nicodemos and Makarios to publish the *Philokalia* despite hesitations about where and how it would be received and interpreted. Here, the benefits that mass printing held in keeping the tradition alive and spreading it widely outweighed the inevitable loss of some control over that of tradition.

Matthew Wood's discussion of formative and non-formative *habitus* in *Possession, Power and the New Age: Ambiguities of Authority in Neoliberal Societies* can be read, in one sense, as an extension of Thompson's notion of aspects of tradition (Wood 2007). In his account, the role of authority has not disappeared in the New Age milieu, but instead often plays a non-formative role in contemporary subjectivities. That is, authority is sometimes used as a tool for the construction of group and individual identity without carrying with it the same imperative as a formative authority. In the common case of various competing authorities, multiple authorities are often pieced together to form and support a self-image and world-image.

In many accounts of the practices, the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are presented as contemplative traditions that can revive a Christianity that is perceived as spiritually dead. They are often seen as alternatives to forms of Christianity that lack contemplative or mystical traditions. Thus, the revival of the practices is part of a wider attempt to provide a Christian alternative

to the non-Christian Eastern traditions that have gained popularity in the West over the last century and are often seen as more spiritual and mystical. Many who write on the subject empathize with the decision of some to shift away from mainstream Christianity and towards Eastern religions because Christianity's contemplative tradition is not as apparent or emphasized as that of other faiths. According to this view, seekers who are drawn towards traditions that are not 'native' to Western culture do not yet know of the mystical dimensions and spiritual riches of Christianity. The Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are consequently employed as examples of a spirituality and mysticism found throughout Christianity's history that are not known to most Westerners.

As in Harvey Cox's book *Turning East* (1978), there is sometimes a call to look eastward for spiritual riches but not *too* far eastward. The appeal of the practices is that they involve spiritual discipline and mysticism *within* the bounds of Christianity. The practices of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are only several of the many Christian contemplative practices that have gained popularity such as *Lectio Divina*, Centering Prayer and the Ignatian Exercises. The general argument is that one does not have to leave Christianity to find a mystical path; it has always been there, waiting to be found. This is a common approach to the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, as seen in the last two chapters.

This eastward turn is not a new phenomenon for European and American culture. Edward Said's *Orientalism* tracks presentations of the 'Eastern other' in Western culture and concludes that these presentations often tell us more about Western aspirations and fears than they do about the 'East' itself (Said 1978). Said is critical of this trend of Western projection and stereotyping for its misrepresentation of the 'East' based on Western needs. Other authors such as J. J. Clarke see the pitfalls of Orientalism in the past and the dangers it presents for the present and future, but also point out the constructive role it has played in presenting alternative visions and philosophies to the West that have questioned and undermined the hegemony of the predominant assumptions and world views (Clarke 1997). Clarke highlights the subversive and self-reflexive element in Western presentations of the East, while also admitting the truth of Said's critique in many instances (6). Instead of being a simple tool of Western imperialism, as it is often viewed, Orientalism 'represents a countermovement [. . .] which in various ways has often tended to subvert rather than to confirm the discursive structures of imperial power' (9). For example, while the image of the East as exotic, mystical and otherworldly can now be seen as an obvious Western fabrication or at least an elaboration,

the image was often constructed or invoked with the purpose of presenting a contrasting alternative to the prevailing social and cultural norms 'to challenge and disrupt the master narratives of the colonising powers' (9). In some representations, the East is seen as superior to the West and as a source of inspiration and renewal (3). While the image of the East often reveals more about the West than the actual East, what is often revealed is a critique of what the writer feels the West is lacking. Thus, while the harm in misrepresentation and stereotype should not be ignored, neither should be the various ways in which these often incorrect or incomplete images are used.

Clarke's multifaceted understanding of Orientalism can be seen as complementary to the way tradition is described by authors such as Michael D. Clark (2005). Both understandings emphasize that tradition can 'be used to validate as well as to oppose change' (Clark 2005: 17). Orientalism can either reinforce the cultural status quo if the projected image of the 'Other' has a negative implication, or it can challenge a present situation if the 'Other' is seen in a positive light. The first case can be considered a conservative exoticism, while the second case is a critical or reflexive exoticism. In the same way, tradition understood as involving a local past and continuity can be used to promote either of these ends. By offering 'authorization for innovation in past experience [. . .] extending rather than limiting the possibilities of individual and collective life' tradition is sometimes used as a framework and starting point for reflexive thought and action (17). Here it can be seen attempting to overcome and transcend the isolation of time and place by connecting with the past. It is also employed to conserve and protect the tradition itself or other cultural norms and to expel what is seen as foreign to it. While Orientalism uses the strategy of contrast, traditionalism's strategy is that of continuity. It is no surprise, then, that each strategy has been put to imperial and colonialist uses since tradition can wilfully project a self-image outward onto others and Orientalism often implies such an image in its portrayal of others (18). What has been less emphasized in recent scholarly work is the variety of ways in which they can also do just the opposite: Orientalism can work against the colonizers by undermining the world view according to which they operate and tradition can work to expand and legitimate novelty and innovation. Tradition is usually what is seen as familiar and is set up against the unfamiliar 'Other', but sometimes these two concepts intersect and lead to greater reflection upon tradition from within tradition.

Many of the representations that name Eastern Orthodoxy as a mystical alternative rely on stereotypes that oppose the rationality of the West to the

mystical East and that implicitly rest on comparisons to other traditions. Even the term 'Eastern Orthodoxy', which is commonly used to distinguish Orthodox Christianity, could lead to either the romanticization or the denigration of the faith and its practices. Proponents sometimes use the term 'Eastern' to either highlight its connection to the concept of the 'mystical East' or to distinguish it from a feared or distrusted Western culture or Western Christianity. Conversely, some may dismiss the faith and practices using the same term 'Eastern' by focusing on its relation to other non-Western religions that are perceived as alien or threatening. The theme of balancing between the familiar and unfamiliar will continue throughout the remainder of this chapter.

In Kyriacos Markides' *Gifts of the Desert: The Forgotten Path of Christian Spirituality*, the author describes his conversation with Metropolitan Kallistos Ware on the failures of institutional churches and on the unique contributions of Eastern Orthodoxy for 'modern seekers' (Markides 2005). Ware is somewhat ambivalent about 'New Age' seekers: 'A great deal that goes on by the name "New Age" is very contrary to Orthodoxy [but] in what is called the New Age there *is* a genuine searching for a spiritual meaning in life' (173). He laments that institutional churches, including the Eastern Orthodox Church, have failed this population by presenting Christianity in a way that is uninteresting to the seekers and does not address the experiential aspects of Christianity (174). In connection to this point, Ware also rhetorically asks Markides how many Orthodox churches in America are likely to have regular sermons on the Jesus Prayer (174).

Markides questions Ware on what the unique contribution of Orthodox spirituality is for the modern seeker (175). In addition to liturgical prayer, a sense of a living unbroken tradition and the notion of martyrdom, Ware lists inner prayer as one of the four 'elements of conversion' from his own personal experience (177). By inner prayer, Ware says he refers to the Jesus Prayer, the *Philokalia* and the theology of the divine light as explained by Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas (175–7). Later in the book, Markides paraphrases his spiritual mentor, Fr. Maximos, who gives his own account of this unique contribution: Eastern Orthodoxy could 'show how Europeans can get to know God' since it has 'preserved in an intact form those mystical pathways leading to the direct experience of God' as opposed to the overemphasis on rationality that is sometimes said to characterize the Western approach to the divine (203). After some initial uncertainty, Fr. Maximos comes to the conclusion that Orthodox spirituality as it is practised and written about by saints and elders is not intended exclusively for monks, but can help everyone confronting life's

problems strive towards perfection (76). When Markides asks Fr. Maximos about those who wish to say the Jesus Prayer but are not Orthodox, Fr. Maximos answers by saying that anyone can engage in the Jesus Prayer, or Prayer of the Heart, but 'what is important, however, is to pray with humility and not reduce the prayer to some kind of mental technique' (227). He claims that by approaching the prayer as a technique, regardless of one's affiliation, one is risking an approach that can backfire and have unpleasant consequences that are not specified (227). Echoing Ware's concept of the 'urban hesychast' (Ware 1985: 413), Fr. Maximos claims that 'the modern city is the equivalent of the desert that the early fathers sought for their spiritual practices. You can be a hermit in a big city without anyone noticing' (228).

Markides suggests to Fr. Maximos that many people are more comfortable with the idea of practising meditation than they are with praying because of 'the individualistic ethos of our times' and a perception that meditation is 'culturally legitimate whereas prayer is associated with the fundamentalists' (206). Fr. Maximos insists that prayer fundamentally differs from meditation, despite any superficial similarities. He describes prayer as 'a formidable science' that has as its primary aim union with the personal God (206). Fr. Maximos admits to knowing little about meditation but claims that from what he does know, this aim of union with a personal God does not seem to be its primary goal (206). Later, he explains his stance further: in prayer, he says, once one journeys 'inward' the next step is to 'turn your gaze towards God' and not 'remain enclosed within yourself as many people do with contemporary methods of self-exploration. [. . .] Otherwise you may be stuck within your own ego' (213). Markides notes how many who are 'disenchanted with the rationalization of their own religious tradition' turn towards Buddhism or Hinduism and reciting mantras and prayers they do not understand, finding these more attractive and palatable than the rituals within their own tradition (218). In response to this, Fr. Maximos insists that, for prayer to be truly effective 'we must know and understand what we say' (218).

At a later point in the book, Markides himself gives an answer to what Eastern Orthodox spirituality and monasticism can contribute to the lives and understanding of individuals living outside the Eastern Orthodox tradition in the modern world. In his answer, Markides recommends 'the Threefold Way of purification, illumination, and God realization (Catharsis, Fotisis, Theosis)' as 'an archetypal blueprint of human destiny' and suggests that if it were widely acknowledged as such, it could lead us to the farthest reaches of self-understanding and knowledge of the deepest levels of reality (348). The author then further suggests that the future of

the human race may depend on taking seriously and incorporating the perspectives of Orthodox elders, whose gift to humanity is this 'Threefold Way' towards experience of God (348, 353–6).

One Amazon review of his earlier book *The Mountain of Silence: A Search for Orthodox Spirituality* (2001) describes Markides as 'a former skeptic who sought spiritual truths in the South and East Asian religions, but then came to realize the Orthodox Christian faith of his youth is also an "Eastern" religion with roots in mystical practice'.[3] Other reviews of *The Mountain of Silence* are more critical, accusing Markides of verging on syncretism and presenting Orthodox spirituality as a type of 'Christian yogic system' while ignoring the Church's warnings 'of practising spiritual disciplines outside of their context [. . .] to seek an avenue for bringing Orthodox mysticism to the modern world without necessarily bringing Orthodoxy'. In a corresponding sentiment, an Amazon review of the *Philokalia* by reviewer R. Kirkham makes the arguments that 'in this era when people are turning to mysticism of all sorts, the Philokalia offers a depth to match the deepest thirst in a totally Christian setting'.[4] As seen in other reviews, many Christian-born Westerners have begun their seeking by studying and practising Buddhism but have then returned to Christianity in its Eastern Orthodox form and have completed 'the spiritual puzzle that I'd been trying to put together for so many years".[5]

In Andrew Walker's preface to *The Way of a Pilgrim*, he comments:

> Westerners tend either to reject Russian Orthodoxy because they think it pagan or simply exotic. Or conversely they tend to rush into it with open arms and glazed eyes because they have a romantic attachment to all things spiritual and fail to notice that Orthodox mysticism rests securely in a dogmatic theological framework that is trinitarian and incarnational. (Walker 1995: v)

Walker insists that the 'Jesus Prayer is not for spiritual fanatics, those looking for yet another new mantra, or people who want to shiver from the latest charismatic sensation' (v). In John Baggley's introductory text on Orthodox icons and the theology that underlies them, he notes 'there has recently been a great interest in Orthodox spirituality. It is as if something from the Christian East has been offered to the Christian West at a time when the spiritual searches of many Western people have been likely to by-pass Christianity altogether' (1996: 2–3).

Another annotated version of *The Way of a Pilgrim* contains a foreword with personal reflections on the book by Andrew Harvey who was once 'convinced that spiritual truth could only be found in India and the Eastern

spiritual traditions, and that Christianity was "finished" and "burned out"' (Harvey 2003: vii). When his friend asked him, 'how can you judge the Christian mystical tradition by what you see in the contemporary church?' Harvey began exploring Eastern Orthodox mysticism and was 'transfixed and humbled by what I found' (viii). He came to the conclusion that the practice of *japa* he had found in India, 'repeating the name of God in the heart [. . .] the same simple, all-transforming discovery of the power of the divine name', had also been discovered in Eastern Orthodoxy (viii). The states of prayer described by the pilgrim 'were no less profound and poignant than [. . .] the great Hindu and Sufi mystics the discovery of whom had changed my life' and 'in the string of quotes from the *Philokalia* [. . .] I recognized the pure sober note of mystical certainty and rigor that had thrilled me in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Upanishads' (viii).

Harvey Cox makes the point that Eastern contemplative and meditative practices have caught on successfully in the Western world because Christianity has contemplative practices in its own history such as hesychasm (1978: 63–4). This may be true, but the argument can also be reversed to introduce another factor in this success: perhaps Christian contemplative traditions have caught on successfully because they were spurred on by an initial interest in non-Christian contemplative traditions. As seen in discussions in the last two chapters, hesychasm is often presented as a Christian contemplative or mystical alternative to Buddhism or Hinduism, indicating that this is at least one factor in their popularity. This is part of a larger attempt to fulfil a hunger for contemplative disciplines and mysticism that has driven many seekers to non-Christian religions.

In his article 'Spirituality in Today's World', Ewert Cousins supports the idea that, in the middle of the twentieth century, an interest in Eastern spirituality led to an attempt to recover the spiritual traditions of the West (Cousins 1987). Cousins describes the process as beginning with a disillusionment with Western culture in the 1960s following World War II. For many, their own churches did not help because 'they seemed caught up with external observance and unable to touch the spiritual core of religion' (306). Teachings and practices from Eastern traditions came in to fill this void and were presented by Eastern and Western teachers 'in a way that could be assimilated by Westerners' (306). After this awakening to spirituality, Western Jews and Christians began searching for similar inspiration from their own traditions, asking, 'does Judaism of Christianity possess a body of spiritual wisdom comparable to that of Hinduism and Buddhism? Spiritual techniques like those of yoga or Zen meditation?' (307). Following this search was a 'recovery of traditional Western spirituality – through

spiritual practice, academic research, and major publishing projects' (307). This recovery prompted an interest in Kabbalah, Hasidism and Christian monasticism. The publishing of the *Philokalia* and other hesychastic literature in English can also be seen as a part of this recovery. Around the same time, Centering Prayer, Christian meditation and the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius became popular as well (313). Cousins notes that some of these practices, such as the Ignatian discernment of spirits and spiritual direction, were blended with the psychology contemporary at the time (313). These examples suggest that while Eastern practices may have been primed by early contemplative traditions in Christianity (Cox 1978), the interest in these Eastern practices certainly also led to a reaction that emphasized the mystical traditions of Christianity as alternatives that are seen as more native to Westerners.

Some sources see in the practices the possibility for a type of ecumenism that functions on the level of esoteric or mystical practice, rather than on doctrine. While religious traditions can be quite distinct in their doctrines, the argument claims they are united at the more fundamental metaphysical or mystical level. This approach is especially apparent in Perennialist sources that see a need for inter-religious dialogue to combat religious intolerance, but refuse to either ignore doctrinal differences or to deny that other paths could be revealed and lead a person to God. Thus, when seen as quintessential practices of mystical union on a metaphysical level, the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are conceived of as an opening to an esoteric ecumenism that recognizes religious distinctions but, ultimately, sees religions as sharing an essential core (Cutsinger 2002). This esoteric ecumenism sees the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm and analogous practices in other religions as leading to an esoteric point of meeting of traditions *beyond* the exoteric level of doctrine. This emphasis is important since the esoteric level is understood as deeper and more essential than the exoteric level, which is a transitional, but necessary, stepping-stone into the esoteric level. Even so, occasionally contradictory doctrines are considered important in their own right because they are integral parts of the overall world view and path of transformation known as a tradition.

This leads to the issue of the relation of the practices to wider Eastern Orthodox tradition. As mentioned above, the Perennialist perspective insists that spiritual practices are part of an inner path of transformation found in many different traditions and must be considered within the context of a larger tradition and not practised in isolation from the tradition as a whole. Therefore Perennialists insist that, while there is more than one revealed tradition, the tradition one chooses to follow must be followed

fully. This demonstrates a very formal and structuralist understanding of tradition where each element has a function and fits together into a coherent whole. Changing a single element through human decision and not divine revelation could mean jeopardizing the entire tradition. A distinction is made between esoteric, where there is a unity of authentic traditions, and exoteric, where there are formal differences, but both are claimed as necessary elements of an entire tradition. This distinction reveals an essentialist understanding of tradition that accompanies a structuralist view.

Many Eastern Orthodox perspectives stress the interrelation of mysticism and doctrine but do not maintain a distinction between them as Perennialists do between esoteric and exoteric. Mysticism and doctrine are seen to be connected in a way that makes them dependent on each other and therefore, if there is no unity of dogma, then there is no unity of mysticism and, conversely, the truth or falsehood of a mysticism is reflected in its dogma. To be more specific, dogma is seen as both the crystallization and continuation of mystical experience. The implication of this is the labelling of divergences in dogma as heretical and dangerous because they are seen as potentially hindering the 'tried and true' path to union with God. Eastern Orthodox authors usually link dogma and mysticism to the point that they are mutually dependent and argue for the most robust sense of tradition in which both of these factors are equally important and necessary aspects of the tradition as a whole.

In contrast, many other sources claim that the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are not inseparably connected to the rest of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Some feel that they should be able to use the Jesus Prayer, icons or other 'tools' from this tradition and apply them in their own lives to their own faith without having to adopt the tradition *in toto*. As seen in the discussions of earlier chapters, this is often presented as a matter of having the freedom to adopt these practices to one's own particular setting, rather than being forced to adapt to a new faith and world view. The practices are simply tools to aid in one's personal relationship with God rather than inseparable elements of a larger tradition with each element playing a necessary role.

Despite reservations regarding the necessity of a spiritual father, many Orthodox commentators are not overly troubled by the use of the Jesus Prayer among those of other denominations or faiths, provided they are sincerely addressing the prayer to Jesus. Even when spiritual or psychic danger is not the issue, some of these commentators are wary of the use of the Jesus Prayer and serious application of the instructions of Eastern

Orthodox spiritual texts on inner prayer. This is occasionally strongly condemned as selective appropriation out of context, displaying a structuralist and totalist view of tradition, but just as often it is emphasized that the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are the means or tools, not the end, of religious life and that anyone can say them, as long as they say them simply, humbly and honestly. In many accounts, this balancing act reflects a deep ambivalence towards the place of these practices within wider tradition.

Along with the question of the relationship of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm to the wider Eastern Orthodox tradition, the issue of how they are related to the practices of other religions is another repeating theme of the last several chapters. For most Orthodox authors, any relation to other practices is either purely coincidental, with similar practices arising out of different settings for pragmatic reasons, or are a result of direct historical influence. If there were a historical influence or borrowing, many Orthodox authors would prefer it to be a matter of others borrowing from Orthodox sources rather than vice versa. This tendency exposes sensitivity to the issue of syncretism, but even when such a connection or influence is seriously entertained, the methods of prayer are claimed to be mere props and aids for the prayer, which is ultimately more akin to a personal relationship than a mere technique. While some claim that current research does not yet sufficiently explain any potential commonalities between practices or encourage further study on the matter, others would rather avoid the subject altogether and see it as a distraction from personal devotion to the Orthodox path of prayer.

Within the Perennialist perspective, views tend to emphasize the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm as analogous to other forms of invocation of a divine name, prayer of the heart and means to union with God. The meeting point of various and apparently dissimilar traditions in their mystical practices is one major premise of the claim of an esoteric or transcendent unity of religions. In contrast to this view, some of those who use the Jesus Prayer and read hesychast authors strive to distance the practices from non-Christian parallels. Post-Evangelical and Ancient-Future circles receive frequent criticism from mainstream Evangelicals who decry the practices as having no sound Biblical support and as being effectively the same as non-Christian meditation but with Christian terminology. This has caused the same defensive stance that is sometimes found in Orthodox responses to claims of non-Christian parallels, except that there is no apparent criticism of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer from within the Eastern Orthodox Church as they enjoy more or less universal support within the Orthodox world. There is debate within Evangelical and post-Evangelical groups

about whether and how to use practices such as these that predate the Reformation, and thus the more the practices are seen as unique to Christianity, the more legitimate they become.

The 'use' of the practices has been interpreted here in a wide sense that includes praying the prayer and simply writing about it. Both types of engagement help describe the various ways that groups and individuals encounter the practices. It should also be noted that these ways of 'using' the prayer are not identical, and each has its own implications. More specifically, various types of engagement with the practices point to different understandings of the nature of the practices. If the engagement is strictly theological or comparative, as it often is with Perennialism, consequently interest is more likely to be of a more comparative or theoretical nature.

For example, the silence of Frithjof Schuon, a practising Sufi Perennialist, on his own use and experience of the Jesus Prayer and his emphasis on how the Jesus Prayer is a form of recitation of the divine name resembling other practices, can be interpreted as a theoretical or theological engagement. On the other side of the spectrum are those for whom there is, or should be, no theoretical side and the prayer is strictly about a personal relationship to the Jesus who is addressed. Typically, interest in the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm is at least partially related to the discipline and system of prayer that make it appear unique among other prayers. Because of this, those who wish it to be used as any other Christian address to Jesus, especially Protestants, are often also concerned with discouraging its methodical use. For them, there is no danger if the prayer is treated as other prayers to Jesus, but when used in a systematic way, the practice can raise troubling issues and questions about faith and works.

Without any doubt, there are those within each group that write about the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm and those that actually practise them, but, judging from the sources, some groups, such as those in Emerging Churches, speak of practising the Jesus Prayer in very personal terms, whereas others, such as Perennialist sources, speak less personally about the prayer and more about the nature of the practices. The specifics of hesychasm as evidence of transcendental unity play a more important role in these Perennialist sources than a personal account of the Jesus Prayer as a relationship with Jesus Christ, as it does in Evangelical sources.

While this apparent tendency should not be over-generalized, it does suggest an important point of departure in these approaches. The idea of an esoteric or transcendent unity of religion tends to lead many Perennialist discussions towards the relation of the Jesus Prayer to other

traditions in their core and periphery, rather than a discussion of how one practises or benefits personally from the Jesus Prayer. Such discussions typically focus more on how the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are the essence of 'traditional' Christian practice that leads to union with God, how they relate to the more 'external' doctrines and rites of the Church and how they relate to Sufi, Yogic or Buddhist practices. In other words, from the sources, Perennialist concern at least *appears* to be more theoretical than practical.

Among the several disagreements that come up in discussions of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, one core issue appears to be a matter of the interpretation, not just of the practices in question, but of the nature of 'tradition' in general. There is the general consensus among Perennialists that hierarchy and authority, including spiritual direction, are an essential part of the Jesus Prayer and any tradition or practice. Since the formal elements such as doctrine and ritual are seen as necessary to any tradition, this understanding of authority is much closer to the Eastern Orthodox understanding than that of many other groups. The aim to embrace the entire tradition, accoutrements and all, is followed by a clear distinction between the esoteric and exoteric that distinguishes this understanding of tradition from most Eastern Orthodox views.

Chapter 8

Appropriation

The issue of appropriation and ownership of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm is constantly referred to and debated. With several groups invoking the same practices and tradition, a struggle has also ensued over the claims of control and correct interpretation, bringing with it the question of ownership and the tradition's proper domain. This can be seen especially clearly in contrasting claims on the freedom to use the Jesus Prayer without this entailing an obligation to accept any other aspects of Orthodox Christianity. Many voices from within the Orthodox Church accuse this perspective of being a piecemeal misappropriation of a heritage they claim as their own. In response to this accusation, those adopting the practice sometimes declare that they have a natural right to adopt any religious practice they choose, or that only God can judge them for any mistakes made in their spiritual life. Additionally, they accuse these criticisms as implying a claim of exclusive spiritual ownership of a treasure from God that belongs to all humanity.

Harvey Cox poses a rhetorical question about Westerners attracted to Buddhism that can also be applied to the current topic: 'They can not accept the world view within which meditation has been integrated [. . .]. Yet they have found that the practice undeniably resonates with something within them. What can they do?' (1978: 65). Cox goes on to discuss the reaction of some people who think that 'to use the technique without the religious world view that comes with it is somehow dishonest, that it shows a disrespect for the whole philosophical structure within which meditational practices have come to the West' (64). According to the author, there are three ways of approaching new practices that one feels an affinity towards: between the extremes of reducing a tradition to a technique and of swallowing a tradition as a whole, a third option involves finding parallels and analogies between traditions and then adjusting, but not jettisoning, one's old world view in combination with the new practices (65).

The issue of religious appropriation is brought up in many other settings with clear parallels to the current topic. While these other settings help to contextualize the issue at hand, there are also certain factors that distinguish the present case of appropriation from other such cases. The most well-known cases relate to appropriation in Native American and shamanic contexts. Several texts on the accusations and counter-accusations in these cases will shed light on appropriation as it pertains to the current topic. This presentation of religious appropriation in other contexts will not be exhaustive in its thoroughness but will serve to provide a wider background on the subject and introduce several relevant theories.

In his book *Shamans/Neo-Shamans: Ecstasy, Alternative Archaeologies and Contemporary Pagans*, Robert Wallis evenhandedly evaluates many of the criticisms and apologetics regarding the ways in which shamanism and paganism have been appropriated by non-native audiences (Wallis 2003).[1] Among the main accusations directed at core-shamanism and other neo-shamanisms are that they decontextualize and universalize, psychologize and individualize, romanticize and perpetuate cultural primitivism (49). In this critique, the shaman, which is described as originally being a distinct social role within a particular context and referring to particular circumstances, has been recreated to signify something that everyone can participate in regardless of societal position.

Post-colonial theory often characterizes 'the problem of cultural appropriation' as a new covert form of colonization that is more insidious than the older overt forms since it is harder to detect and, thus, harder to resist (17–18). According to Wallis, from the point of view of many core-shamans, 'their [the core-shamans'] utilizations of indigenous culture are sympathetic to the aims of indigenous people' (17). Other times, indigenous protest is 'written off as being political, paranoid, and/or sensationalist' (17). Some acknowledge having appropriated but deny that they have misappropriated or expropriated, or taken without proper compensation. One defence given for appropriation is that it keeps the tradition alive and relevant in times while it is endangered. For example, Graham Harvey speaks of neo-shamanism as compensating for appropriation by 'paying extra' to shamanism when it 'revitalizes existing methods' and honours it as a force for change (Harvey 1997: 117). Others deny that a cultural or spiritual tradition can belong to a group in the first place and see only stinginess in the reluctance to share spiritual riches that could benefit others. According to Wallis, 'some neo-Shamans go even further, to erase native cultures from history by [. . .] suggesting they are incapable custodians of their shamanic inheritance which should be surrendered into

more capable hands' (Wallis 2003: 17). This seems to reflect their mistrust in the competence of the original bearers of a tradition. Some feel that they have a birthright and a basic freedom to use shamanic practices and others, though understanding the indigenous exclusivist position, feel that the message is too important for Earth's survival not to be disseminated (201).

The accusation of universalization is described by Jakobsen as a process where 'the power of the specialist is what neo-shamanism is attempting to eliminate [. . .] the knowledge of the shaman is no longer of an esoteric character but instead available to all' (Jakobsen 1999: 217; Wallis 2003: 50). Another sense in which shamanism is universalized is apparent in the term itself. What are culturally and geographically separated phenomena are classified as instances of an enduring and universal category of shamanism. This process was begun by Mircea Eliade in his book *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964) and continued by the founder of core-shamanism, Michael Harner, and many others (Wallis 2003: 50). In fact, the very title of Eliade's book embodies the criticisms often levelled at neo-shamanism: 'Archaic' referring to the romanticized cultural primitivism, 'techniques' to the overemphasis on technique and 'ecstasy' to the declared importance of individual interior psychological experience. Harner followed Eliade by adopting his strategy of defining shamanism as the common elements shared by various shamanisms: entering altered states of consciousness, journeying to other worlds, and healing (50–1). Additionally, some neo-shamans argue that a universal spiritual truth is found in all shamanism and each form of shamanism shares essential common elements with other forms, an understanding that often does not correspond to that of indigenous shamanic practitioners (220).

By consolidating diverse shamanisms into one category, core-shamanism, according to some critics, also decontextualizes a variety of practices. Wallis quotes Graham Harvey: 'Shamanism has been appropriated from these societies (rarely if ever given or exported by them), distilled into a set of techniques and re-contextualised for modern urban societies' (Harvey 1997: 108; Wallis 2003: 51). When the common elements of shamanism are emphasized, 'there is no need for "cultural baggage" or the trappings of traditional shamans, only the techniques of shamanisms are required' (Wallis 2003: 51). Michael Harner teaches the 'basic principles' that are common to most shamanic societies and teaches these without 'all these elaborations and specializations that make them a product of each cultural context' (51, personal comment by Harner). This downplaying of cultural specificity is often accused of homogenizing and ignoring the borrowed sources, since the techniques of shamanism, and not each tradition as a whole, are paramount for core-shamanism (51). Wallis notes that this

removes indigenous people from the equation and reduces religion to a set of techniques (51). In this case, the only role of indigenous shamans is to legitimate the practices of neo-shamans (51).

Re-contextualization and universalization can be described as the two sides of the coin of appropriation. This argument proceeds by claiming that core-shamanism takes the practices out of their context, picks out what is applicable or palatable in a new situation, in this case a 'modern urban society', (Harvey 1997: 108) then redefines the practices based on these criteria and applies it to the new situation. Re-contextualization in other cases could lead to localization, where a global product is adapted to a local setting, but in this case, many local indigenous shamanisms are being universalized into 'shamanism' in order to be adaptable to a global setting where the term could apply to any one who decided to be a shaman.

Personal choice in approaching shamanism is another area that causes concern for many critics. Whereas indigenous shamans have usually emphasized the lack of choice one has in being called to be a shaman, core and neo-shamanism often describe the process as more a matter of personal choice (Wallis 2003: 56). Critics observe that this reflects the culture for which the practices are being adapted and does not represent the way they are understood by indigenous shamans. This is one instance of the accusation of romanticization, which says that in core-shamanism, the 'harsh realities of modern indigenous life don't need to be encountered and don't match up with the romantic image' (51). For instance, Wallis points out that Pueblo religion has long 'fascinated Westerners for its exoticism, complexity and obscurity' without concern for the realities of indigenous life (214).

The same applies to claims that the practices of shamanism are controllable and safe and 'by virtue of their universality, available to be practiced by anyone' (52). This is not what is reported by many indigenous shamans, who say that shamanic practices are anything but controllable and not as safe as some might hope (53). Indeed, for them there seems to be a proportional relationship between the degree of healing and power and the amount of danger that must be encountered (54). The insistence on control in core-shamanism is in some ways an effort to distinguish it from mediumship and possession, and some see it as indicative of a wider control-obsessed culture (Harvey 1997: 108: Wallis 2003: 54). According to Graham Harvey, in Michael Harner's method, the worst thing that one might encounter is a frightening aspect of oneself and anything else is considered sorcery (Harvey 1997: 112; Wallis 2003: 53). Because of the danger and negative Western connotations of certain animals, Harner advises against accepting as helpers the power animals considered by indigenous

shamanisms as most effective, and consequently the hardest to control (Jakobsen 1999: 191; Wallis 2003: 53).

Wallis calls the 'neo-Shamanic aim to embrace that which is appealing and downplay the negative aspects of shamanisms, a neat example of scientific/Western compartmentalizing and of separating that which to its originators is inseparable: where there is healing for many shamans, there is danger' (Wallis 2003: 54). This avoidance of the 'dark side of shamanism' confirms for some the concern expressed by neo-shamanic practitioner Gordon 'The Toad' MacLellan that 'a lot of teachings are taken piecemeal, choosing the gentle bits and missing the fullness of tradition by avoiding some of the less palatable (to Western tastes) stuff' (53–4). Additionally, the misuse of practices by outsiders is sometimes seen as even more dangerous, exposing one 'to potential harm and even death' (214).

Another concern with the romanticization of shamanism is that it is portrayed as less dogmatic and hierarchical and more egalitarian and democratic than indigenous shamanisms actually are (55). Wallis also refers to criticisms of presenting shamanism as an apolitical or pre-political role (56–7). In this view, core-shamanism tries to remove culture and thus politics so that users are free from responsibility to traditional shamans and from the bonds of cultural politics (57). Michael F. Brown claims that while indigenous shamanisms may challenge or reinforce the status quo, they are political in a broad sense of being social, unlike a channelling session where people come together for a single short event (Brown 1997: 79).

For authors such as Vitebsky, this entails an asocial, individualized and psychologized understanding of shamanism (Vitebsky 1995). In this case, 'the shamanic experience becomes simply a set of techniques removed from their original cultural and community contexts' and brought 'up-to-date' with psychotherapeutic and psychiatric techniques and a watered-down internalized cosmology (Vitebsky 1995: 193, 200–1). Vitebsky claims that the spirit world is not viewed as something existing in reality but is seen in terms of Jungian archetypes and inner worlds while healing is seen as a strictly psychological process (Wallis 2003: 59). Wallis suggests that this shows that 'many neo-Shamans find it difficult to embrace shamanisms and their ideologies in their entirety' (59). Instead, shamanism is reduced to its 'lowest common denominators', such as drumming and vision quests (Harvey 1997: 110). An inevitable result, according to Vitebsky is that

> indigenous knowledge, when transplanted and commoditized comes to take on the fragmentary nature by which it is appropriated. This is surely

> why indigenous or local knowledge must always remain epistemologically marginal to global knowledge. The one thing global culture cannot recapture is the holistic nature of indigenous knowledge. (Wallis 2003: 77–8; Vitebsky 1995: 201)

Harvey is not surprised that neo-shamanism differs from indigenous shamanisms since the cultural contexts are different: neo-shamanism is more individualistic and fragmented because people choose to participate rather than being compelled by powerful initiatory experience (Harvey 1997: 111).

Harvey Cox serves as an early example of a writer that displays sensitivity to the issue of appropriation, or what he calls adaptation, and he brings up the related issues of individualization and psychologization (Cox 1978: 18). While pointing out that some Eastern teachers have intentionally presented their ideas in the garb of Western individualist psychology, the author worries that

> the current psychologizing of Eastern contemplatives disciplines – unless it is preceded by a thorough revolution in Western psychology itself – could rob these disciplines of their spiritual substance. It could pervert them into Western mental-health gimmicks and thereby prevent them from introducing the sharply alternative vision of life they are capable of bringing to us. (75)

He then goes on to express his concern that 'it would not be a merger but an absorption. It would not cure the soullessness of psychology but would distort the Oriental teachings into something they are not' by submitting them to Western psychology's sole preoccupation with the self, 'sanctified not only as a therapeutic technique but now also as a sacramental procedure, a means of grace' where 'quest for the true self becomes the path to the Kingdom' (75, 77). For the author,

> most of the movements I looked into have altered the Oriental original so profoundly that little can be gained by viewing them in the light of classical ancestry. They are far more 'neo' – than 'Oriental.' [. . .] By now most of them are Western movements and are best understood as such. (18)

Many also accuse neo-shamanism and core-shamanism of commodifying practices by approaching them with a consumerist ethic (Wallis 2003: 59;

Harvey 1997: 110). For example, some claim that Michael Harner is selling rapid results of development and healing by saying that a shaman can do in a few minutes what takes a Yogi years to accomplish (Wallis 2003: 59–60). Michael F. Brown strongly opposes this 'spiritual commerce' in his book *The Channeling Zone: American Spirituality in an Anxious Age* (Brown 1997).[2] Brown portrays the accumulation of Native American practices by some Western practitioners who attempt to profit from them as 'professional diversification' (163). Wallis thinks this Marxist-based criticism of the intermingling of spirituality and money ignores the constant fact of spiritual interchange and material compensation in indigenous shamanisms (Wallis 2003: 60). Wallis' further critique sees in the love for what is considered archaic and nature-based a subtle form of cultural primitivism where natives are seen as closer to nature and also more subject to it. Harvey asks why the same amount of reverence and mystique is not attached to the practices of other 'archaic and marginalized or abandoned lifestyles', such as English shepherds, and suggests that non-European culture is seen as closer to nature, more wholesome, spiritual, not dogmatic or God-controlled (Harvey 1997: 109–10). Authors such as Mulcock have warned that this characterization allows neo-shamans to rely on a constructed stereotype of a shaman and ignore the real voices of actual indigenous people and their everyday problems (Wallis 2003: 62–3). For those such as Kehoe, indigenous peoples do not necessarily 'retain a primordial wisdom that could heal our troubled world' and often this misconception deflects attention from their real struggles (Wallis 2003: 63; Kehoe 1990: 194).

Wallis touches on several complications towards the end of the book. He asks whether 'cultural copyright' is possible since approaching the topic in terms of 'intellectual property rights' often commodifies as much as the appropriations in question (Wallis 2003: 203). As Wallis explains, 'despite the inappropriateness of western legal terms, this is the only framework in which they can assert control' (203). This also assumes the existence of an authentic tradition that is being altered, whereas Wallis claims traditions are always changing and adapting (203–4). Indigenous communities are themselves learning core-shamanism to uniquely elaborate on and revitalize their own traditions, which Wallis sees as an instance of transculturation, hybridity, synergy or syncretism (222, 250). Other scholars in this debate such as Vitebsky posit that local traditions are being psychologized, de-religionized and globalized by, not only global, but also local users (Wallis 2003: 224; Vitebsky 1995*b*: 190–1).

In this setting, the issue is often a matter of ethnicity and participation in some indigenous rituals requires a kind of metaphorical membership card

that guarantees one's blood quantum as sufficiently indigenous (Wallis 2003: 204). Wallis rightly points out that this ethnic definition distinguishes many indigenous religions from evangelistic religions, such as Christianity, not usually based on ethnicity (220). Some indigenous groups that are inclusive in their view of who can engage in their traditional practices may be more open because their culture's survival is less threatened (219). Wallis concludes that, while there is plenty to criticize in neo-shamanism, it also has something to offer to both indigenous shamanisms and those not from shamanic societies. He sees that the transfer of practices from local contexts to global ones certainly changes meanings but denies that 'unilateral appropriation' does full justice to the complexity of the situation (225).

Paul C. Johnson explores many of the same issues in a more succinct way in his chapter 'Shamanism from Ecuador to Chicago: a case study in New Age ritual appropriation' from *Shamanism: a reader* (Johnson 2003). Johnson takes as his starting point Wendy Doniger's statement that it is 'at least possible that religious texts, even when read in an alien context, can provide a ground in which new, modern religious communities can take root' (334). He asks whether this is also possible with ritual since it 'faces not only the hermeneutic problem of the text (how it is interpreted differently in different historical contexts), but also the problem of continuity of performance' (334). He claims that the possibility of appropriation of shamanism across cultural boundaries rests on the assumptions that shamanism is a nearly universal religious phenomenon and that it is a technique and not a religion (334–5). One of Johnson's contributions is to show neo-shamanism as 'deeply embedded in its *own* cultural matrix', and to provide criteria to distinguish this cultural matrix from that of indigenous shamanism (335).

Johnson recognizes that there is also cultural borrowing in indigenous shamanism but points out that, when taking into account post-colonial scholarship, 'one can not speak of equivalence of agency in ritual appropriation' (351). Instead, the type of appropriation that is active in neo-shamanism 'incorporates elements of a colonial hierarchy which is materially, politically and socially more powerful' whereas the other type of appropriation 'renders "powerful" a subjugated culture' (351). For Johnson, 'Shuar shamanism is embedded in a wider philosophical and material context' and the core-shamanism of Michael Harner diverges from this in several ways that are familiar from Wallis' book: 'universalization (shamanism as culturally non-contingent), individualization (shamanism as malleable to individual needs in the religious marketplace) and the turn

to shamanism as a technique of psychotherapy' (345). Like Wallis, Paul Johnson notes that in the process of universalization, cross-cultural similarities are emphasized over differences and their appearance in diverse and often isolated locations is pragmatically explained by the efficacy of their techniques (353). This universalization also brings with it a formalism where 'a universally available technique which may be put into practice in any cultural context as long as the correct procedures are followed' (346). Johnson clearly summarizes his position as follows:

> [Neo-shamanism's] stated intention to preserve forms of shamanism is obscured by its creation of a new, distinct form – a form which, while it claims universal, non-contingent status, clearly relies on its own proper context, namely that of radical modernity and the discourse of mobility and individual agency. (347–8)

The author realizes that his distinction between these forms of shamanism could be accused of falling back on a form of cultural primitivism (348). To clear away this misconception of his position, Johnson explains that

> what is distinct about modern social systems in which new-shamans make their homes is not any kind [of] essentialist distinction from 'primitive' societies, but rather a particular kind of fragmentation and diversity found in such modern societies which have led to an extreme form of self-reflexivity, relativism and subjectivity (348).

Johnson then draws connections between these characteristics and pluralization, and the theories of Clifford Geertz, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who 'make it clear that what is distinct about the present age is not the decline of religion as such [. . .] but rather the decline of central, socially binding religious authority' (348). Johnson posits that the difference between the uses of tradition by indigenous shamans and neo-shamans is that they 'follow different structuring strategies' in which the former emphasizes preserving traditional knowledge and the latter emphasizes mobility and personal choice and relies on 'a context of radical modernity' (349). Johnson summarizes Charles Taylor's notion of radical modernity as follows:

> Radical modernity entails: (1) the rationalization of a society which relies on (2) universal, standardized conceptions of time and space and (3) the confrontation with a plurality of religions, which leads to (4) a focus on individual agency, choice, 'needs' and preference in the religious

> 'marketplace,' and (5) an obsession with the 'self,' subjectivity and reflexivity; (6) the discourse of mobility – individuals are free and capable of converting to any religious system in any place and at any time because (7) space is phantasmagoric and dislocated from place – there are not really sacred spaces but rather only sacred states of mind and sacred relationships with abstract deities (349).

This is a state which neo-shamans ironically attempt to fight 'against the disembeddedness of radical modernity by relying on local, rooted, "natural", "native" indigenous societies as their source of authority and power' while maintaining an understanding that is still rooted in a radical modernity (349).

The wider background in which the discussion of appropriation can be located is the issue of cross-cultural exchange or what David Howes refers to as 'cross-cultural consumption' (Howes 1996*a*). Howes attempts to make clear what this consists of in his introduction, saying, 'when goods cross borders, then the culture they "substantiate" is no longer the culture in which they circulate' (2). Thus, the fundamental question involved is 'what happens – when the culture of production and the culture of consumption are not the same?' (2). Howes rightly points out that this approach blurs the line between theories of culture and theories of material goods and 'instead of treating cultures as meaningful wholes existing in pristine isolation, the emphasis is on their interface' (2). Howes believes 'the assumption that such goods, on entering a culture, will inevitably retain and communicate the values they are accorded by their culture of origin must be questioned' since 'the goods have been transformed, at least in part, in accordance with the values of the receiving culture' (5). Howes then describes 'the process of recontextualization whereby foreign goods are assigned meanings and uses by the culture of reception' and gives it several different names: hybridization, creolization, domestication, localization, all of which are alternatives to theories of global homogenization or Coca-colonization (5). Howes distinguishes creolization as an alternative to global homogenization in his observation that 'whereas Coca-colonization refers to the flow of goods and values from the West to the rest of the world, creolization is concerned with the in-flow of goods, their reception and domestication' (5). He stresses that the latter theory also takes into account the creativity and ingenuity of the consumer and not just intentionality of the producer (5).

A famous example of this principle is in the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* where a Coca-Cola bottle falls from an airplane into the hands of a Bushman in the Kalahari Desert and takes on a new role in this environment,

with many novel uses unintended by its producers. Though an item may be 'Made in the USA', cross-cultural exchange makes it possible that it can be equally 'Re-Made in Botswana', according to the priorities and needs of the culture (6). In other words, 'goods always have to be contextualized (given meaning, inserted into particular social relationships) to be utilized, and there is no guarantee that the intention of the producer will be recognized, much less respected, by the consumer from another culture' (5–6). Instead, a product may be 'attributed meanings and uses within particular cultures that are very different from those imagined by its manufacturer' (6). Howes describes the typical reaction to this process by Western commentators:

> Indigenous uses of Western commodities are often disparaged for the apparent failure on the part of the natives to 'get things right.' However [. . .] the failure may lie with the observer who sees only mimesis, and does not grasp how Western goods and values are being reworked in the context of local practice. (9)

The flow of cultural goods or practices from a global into a local context has been discussed, but the reverse also occurs in 'the domestication of exotic products' (11–12). In this way, there can be an obvious and 'powerful marketing value of "cultural difference" in the West [. . .] and some of the distortions of local realities which can result from this stress' (11–12). Often, an indigenous tradition is misrepresented in order to agree with the purchaser's preconceptions and to connect with the receiving culture's ideas of tradition and uniqueness (12). Citing Firat for support Howes says that the marketization of culture and the commodification of tradition have become essential to the cultural survival of some communities (Howes 1996*a*: 12). But Howes also sees the danger, as do Wallis, Johnson and Harvey, of a community objecting to the ways in which their culture is portrayed and used by others, asking 'if they object, what strategies can they employ to protect their cultural identities from being commodified?' (13). In combating the process whereby '"native traditions" are disassembled and rearranged in order to recreate a marketable semblance of "authenticity"', Howes notes that a community risks 'treating one's culture as property [which] may eventually lead to its removal from the dynamics of everyday life' (13).

Howes has another chapter in the collection titled 'Cultural Appropriation and Resistance in the American Southwest', where he explores these issues further (Howes 1996*b*: 138–60). Here he describes the perceived

'expropriation of their [Native American and, specifically, Hopi] heritage by the dominant society' (138). This unauthorized 'alienation, popularization and corruption' is seen as an expropriation and a threat to the continuity of Native American traditions in the same way as the expropriation of Native American lands in the nineteenth century (138). Howes acknowledges 'there are lessons and strategies to be derived from it [the Hopi case] that could equally well be used by other aboriginal groups' (140). He cites the two major concerns of Hopis about cultural appropriation – the dilution of tradition wherein misinterpretations are absorbed into the tradition and undermine the culture's world view, and the dissemination of tradition in which the Hopis experience a 'loss of control over the public transmission of culturally sensitive information' (143). An example of both of these is the affair between Marvel Comics and the Hopi people when a public comic book revealed secrets of Hopi initiation ceremonies and thus threatened the successful performance of the ceremonies (157). The author claims 'this form of commercial exploitation and domination through representation goes far beyond what is normally meant by "cultural borrowing"' (157).

Howes demonstrates that one problem with using the American legal system to deal with appropriation is that the system values individual rights and 'typically rejects arguments from cultural difference or "tradition"', regarding 'a right to cultural integrity, understood as a collective right' as nonsense (145). This 'would enable aboriginal peoples to prohibit speech in certain circumstances and declare some things and ideas to be *extra commercium hominum* – that is, beyond the sphere of the market' (145). There are property rights for the land, physical possessions and intellectual property of individuals and groups but Howes sees cultural biases in the legal system against 'alternative (collectivist, relational) social or family and personality structures' (146). There is an additional danger, which is that 'to use law, they would have to think of culture as a property' and by using 'legal resources, therefore, the Hopi would run the risk of completely redefining it, secularizing and reifying their culture in the very act of trying to safeguard it' (157). Still, Howes maintains 'the surest way to challenge it [appropriation] is to invoke the one language that commands respect in Anglo-American society – the language of property' (157).

In response to the question, 'does it make any sense to attempt to protect a culture from appropriation?' Howes gives several arguments on both sides of the debate. Several commentators insist that 'it is simply fallacious to regard cultures as self-contained entities with fixed boundaries', especially in a post-colonial world characterized by porous cultural boundaries and a

significant amount of cultural borrowing and lending (155–6). A second argument, which Howes describes as a 'cultural internationalism', sees cultures as public property and the 'cultural heritage of all mankind' (156). This perspective claims 'cross-cultural borrowing is not only inevitable, but should be recognized as vital both to internal cultural growth and to mutual cultural tolerance and understanding' (156). The third argument against preventing cultural appropriation is that 'all cultures are marked by internal diversity, that within each culture there is to be found a plurality of equally 'authentic' (and interested) definitions of the culture' and therefore 'it is inappropriate to think of cultures either as objects that can be owned or as a determinate set of traits or properties' (156).

In Howes' attempts to reply to these perspectives and against the first argument, he says, 'while all cultures borrow from each other, this borrowing does not take place between equals' (157). Instead, there is domination, power and inequality between trading partners and a danger that some are 'being borrowed – or rather simulated – out of existence' (157). Howes responds to the third point above by noting that commercial corporations also have much internal diversity, as do cultural and ethnic groups, but there is never a question of the company having control over how its symbols and slogans are used and, since Indian nations have a corporate status, Howes reasons that the same should apply to them (157). In an epilogue to the collection subtitled 'The dynamics and ethics of cross-cultural consumption', David Howes and Constance Classen conclude the book with some additional insights on cross-cultural exchange (Classen and Howes 1996: 178–94). They state that,

> In general, the only time when the foreign nature of an imported product is emphasized in the West by its marketers [. . .] is when part of its appeal to Westerners lies in its exotic nature [which] plays on both a Western appetite for exotica, and on a Western nostalgia for a pre-industrial way of life. (186)

'While Western consumers often manifest a desire for "authenticity" when consuming the products and images of other cultures, it is authenticity from a Western, and not an indigenous, perspective' (187). Howes and Classen also refer to appropriation where certain aspects of a cultural good are emphasized for a certain purpose because they are seen as Western, which can function according to misconceptions and stereotypes of the West (186–7). The authors claim that while there are abundant examples of this type of appropriation, it is still less dangerous because most people

recognize these stereotypes as false due to the ubiquity of Western culture around the globe (188).

Several Orthodox authors speak directly about the issues surrounding appropriation. In an article from the Evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*, Bradley Nassif complains of this same treatment of Orthodox tradition by the Protestants who see some element of value in it:

> The problem with the usual Protestant approach to the Great Tradition, however, is the gaps and inconsistencies in retrieval efforts. To many, the Great Tradition is like a library, a place you go to pick out the book you find most helpful. You can discard the ones that no longer seem relevant, while choosing the ones that have proven to be of lasting value. (Nassif 2006: 42)

Even an eminent Protestant theologian such as Thomas Forsyth Torrance warns Orthodox theologians and Churchmen 'of the tendency of non-Orthodox, for example Anglicans, to latch on to Orthodox spirituality without its deep-rooted theology, and therefore only in a sort of sentimental way that is not very helpful to anyone' (Torrance 1983). The Orthodox author Philip Sherrard has expressed a similar sentiment regarding hesychasm: 'hesychasm is essentially an ecclesial tradition whose authenticity depends upon its integration with the whole doctrine and liturgical tradition of the Church' (Sherrard 1998: 261). Closely tied in with the issue of appropriation is the issue of context and its relation to the nature of tradition. The French Orthodox theologian, Jean-Yves Leloup claims that, 'at risk of being dishonest one cannot remove a technique from its ecclesial and monastic context. Knowledge of the milieu wherein the prayer is practiced allows one to discern the theological presuppositions' (Leloup 2003: 104). This concern is echoed repeatedly in several discussions that have already been examined. In *Gifts of the Desert* by Kyriacos Markides, Fr. Maximos, the spiritual father of the author, describes the relevance of the relationship between spiritual elder and disciple to the context of prayer:

> So if someone consults an authentic spiritual elder he or she will receive the appropriate guidance on what needs to be done. The problem arises when people do not ask, or they ask the wrong way. For example, instead of consulting a real physician, patients may open a medical text and draw conclusions about their particular ailment and how to restore health. This can create serious complications and problems. (96)

While Orthodox authors seem to be most concerned about the appropriation of the Jesus Prayer in certain settings, such as the Emergent Churches, sometimes this is extended even to the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. Consider, for instance, the remarks of American Orthodox convert and monk Fr. Seraphim Rose, who is now widely known in Orthodox circles throughout the world. In a recorded talk entitled 'Living the Orthodox Worldview' from 1982 at St. Herman Monastery in Platina, California, Rose speaks on the topic of 'fake spirituality' (Rose 1982). At two minutes and thirty seconds into the lecture Rose says that

> As translations of Orthodox books on the spiritual life become more widely available and the Orthodox vocabulary of spiritual struggle is placed more and more in the air, one finds an increasing number of people talking about hesychasm, the Jesus Prayer, the ascetic life, exalted states of prayer and all manner of things like that [. . .] unless we have a very realistic and very humble awareness of how far away all of us today are from the life of hesychasm and how little prepared we are even to approach it, our interest in it will only be one more expression of our self-centered, plastic universe. The 'Me Generation' goes hesychast. That is what some people are trying to do today. In actuality, they're only adding a new game called 'hesychasm' to the attractions of Disneyland.

Rose mentions the Jesuit priest George Maloney, who has written much on the topic of hesychasm and 'tries to get people in everyday life to be hesychasts' by encouraging charismatic retreats. Rose notes that 'Roman Catholics are going in very big for this sort of thing' to the point that they are influencing the views of Orthodox Christians, but complains that Maloney and others like him are not serious and are 'a very tragic sign of our times'. Rose admits that this does not mean 'we should cease respecting and taking sound instruction from the great hesychast fathers and using the Jesus Prayer ourselves, according to our circumstances and capacity. It just has to be on our level [. . .] down to earth'.

In a biography of Rose by his fellow monk and disciple Hieromonk Damascene, the author complains that 'the awareness of Orthodox monasticism and its ABC's remain largely, even now an outward matter. There is still more *talk* of "elders", "hesychasm", and "prelest" than fruitful monastic struggles themselves' (Damascene 1993: 673). Damascene claims it is possible to embrace outward forms and 'to feel a deep *psychological* peace and ease – and at the same time to remain *spiritually* immature. It is possible to cover over the untreated passions within one by means of a facade or

technique of "correct" spirituality' (673). Continuing this argument, he admits 'Orthodox monastic *forms*, true enough, are being planted in the West; but what about the heart of monasticism and Orthodox Christianity: repentance, humility, love for Christ our God and unquenchable thirst for His Kingdom?' (673). Touching on the turn east for spirituality, the author points out that upon initial exposure to the Jesus Prayer,

> Eugene's [Fr. Seraphim Rose's] first reaction was to note the outward similarity between the Jesus Prayer described in the *Philokalia* and the Shinshu Buddhist prayer to the Amida Buddha called the 'recitation of the Divine Name.' His understanding of Eastern Christian spirituality may have not gone much deeper than this at first, but at least he now knew that the religion of this native culture – Christianity – had something comparable to what he once thought he had to look to other religions to find. (78)

Rose himself writes about the topic in his book *Orthodoxy and the Religion of the Future* (Rose 1990). He describes the religious movements in the 1970s that attempted

> to develop a syncretism of Christianity and Eastern religions, particularly in the realm of 'spiritual practices.' Such attempts more often than not cite the *Philokalia* and the Orthodox tradition of contemplative prayer as being more akin to Eastern spiritual practices than anything that exists in the West. (64)

Even though he made his way to the Orthodox Church on this path, Rose still sees the religious philosophy that underlies this syncretism as false and dangerous (64). He criticizes Jean Déchanet's *Christian Yoga* (1960): 'The fact that the book concludes with an article by the French translator of the *Philokalia*, together with excerpts from the *Philokalia*, only reveals the abyss that separates these dilettantes from the true spirituality of Orthodoxy' (68). He continues, saying

> A sufficient indication of the author's incompetence in understanding the *Philokalia* is the fact that he gives the name 'prayer of the heart' (which in Orthodox tradition is the highest mental prayer, acquired by very few only after many years of ascetic struggle and being humbled by a true God-bearing Elder) to the easy trick of reciting syllables in rhythm with the heartbeat. (68)

Rose goes on to criticize William Johnston's *Christian Zen* (1971):

> Anyone who believes that the agnostic, pagan experience of Zen can be used for a 'contemplative renewal within Christianity' surely knows nothing whatever of the great contemplative tradition of Orthodoxy, which presupposes burning faith, true belief, and intense ascetic struggle; and yet the same author does not hesitate to drag the *Philokalia* and the 'great Orthodox schools' into his narrative. (71)

Regarding the Abbess of Zen Buddhist Shasta Abbey in California, Jiyu Kennett, Rose observes that

> towards Christianity the Abbess and her disciples have a condescending attitude; they respect the *Philokalia* and other Orthodox spiritual texts, recognizing Orthodoxy as the closest to them among 'Christian' bodies, but regarding themselves as being 'beyond' such things as theologies, doctrinal disputes and 'isms' which they regard as not belonging to 'True Religion'. (93)

In *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*, Jeremy Carrette and Richard King give an account of the 'silent takeover of religion' by individualistic and corporatist ideology through the use of the language of spirituality (Carrette and King 2005). The authors view the term spirituality as a contested area that is subject to the influences of the agendas of groups that attempt to define it in a constant politics of knowledge. While they claim not to offer a definitive or essential understanding of spirituality, they express concern about the 'monopoly' over the term by these ideologies and wish to see more socially-engaged forms emerge as correctives to this trend. In their reading, a new defanged form of religion has been introduced to the public sphere in the Western world long after religion was banished to the private domain of individual consciousness since the Enlightenment.

The first step in this process is the privatization of religious traditions as solely matters of individual experience devoid of any real social relevance. Instead of challenging the social order, these values have been individualized to refer to the well-being and pleasure of individuals considered in isolation from their wider social environment. The social, ethical and transformative aspects of traditions have been ignored or retranslated in this new form according to the values of individualism and consumerism with which these religious values were often initially in conflict. This first

step is, in effect, a co-opting of the principles or insights of religious traditions, which are presented as a self-therapy for the ills of individuals that the authors see as actually being caused by the individualist social system that the therapy is promoting. Rather than reaching down to cure the social root of individual ills, Carrette and King maintain this actually perpetuates the crisis by encouraging the notion of individual as separable from society.

Secondly, this privatized religion is put to the service of consumerist and corporate ideology as a marketing tool to sell services, books and techniques based on the priorities and values of individualist consumerism. The apolitical nature of this rebranded and repackaged spirituality prevents it from threatening the social order and requires that it be stripped of any institutional 'baggage' that might accompany it. This means that spirituality is distanced from the original cosmology and cultural world view in which it previously existed as one aspect and concern among others. Ironically, there often occurs both an appeal to certain elements within religion for their authenticity, exoticism or another marketable quality and a distancing from other elements that seem to entail an alternative social or moral code, or anything more radical than personal fulfilment. Another factor at work in the marketing of spirituality as a product and lifestyle choice is that the rebranding should appeal to the cultural values of the world in which it is being 'commodified'. According to the authors, religions from Asia which tend to have less of an institutional connotation are more malleable in conforming to the tastes and expectations of consumers (145).

The process of privatization and commercialization is made possible partly due to the fact that the language of spirituality is ambiguous and adaptable. The authors suggest that these qualities of the term partly explain its widespread success. It can be made marketable to a diverse range of groups with diverse interests. The language used may sometimes be identical to the language found in non-privatized settings but in these cases, the terms are psychologized and 'recast [. . .] in terms of the modern psychological self' (54). Despite their overall distrust of the combination of religion and therapy, the authors also suggest that 'offering therapy may have important individual and social values' if the goal is not to 'sell business ideology itself as a form of "spirituality" ' (141).

Beyond the admittedly political tone of *Selling Spirituality*, the book presents an insightful commentary on the 'unhinging' of spirituality from religion and the selective promotion (and often redefinition) of certain elements within traditions to the detriment of others. The authors raise

several important issues, including decontextualization, psychologization, social-engagement and the strategic use of the ambiguous language of spirituality. One can see that the notion of psychologization plays an equally central role for Carrette and King as it does for Wallis and Johnson. What is involved in a psychologized version of a tradition partly relates to the notion of religious techniques of therapy. Therapeutic language is found in much of the literature on hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer and it will be helpful to look at how this language is used in relation to the critiques of Carrette and King.

There are several prominent Orthodox theologians who speak of the Orthodox tradition as being ultimately a form of therapy for the soul that reunites humans with God. In this conception, the Jesus Prayer functions as a primary therapeutic tool. Two of the most notable examples are Fr. John Romanides and Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos. As Vlachos bluntly puts it in *Orthodox Psychotherapy: The Science of the Fathers*,

> Christianity, and especially Orthodoxy, which preserves the essence of Christianity, [. . .] is mainly a therapeutic science. Every means that it employs, and indeed its very aim, is to heal man and guide him to God. [. . .] So, beyond all other interpretations, Orthodoxy is mainly a therapeutic science and treatment. (Vlachos 1994*a*: 13)

According to Andrew J. Sopko, Romanides sees 'the therapeutic regimen of purification, illumination and glorification' as the essence of Christianity (Sopko 1998: 126, 140). Many elements distinguish this psychotherapy from the more common conception of the term. Unlike conventional psychotherapy, this therapeutic method is intended for all humans since all humans are said to be equally subject to separation from God due to the Fall. It is also centred on the connection between humans and God rather than on individuals in isolation or humans in relation to each other. As the relationship between humans and God is viewed as asymmetrical, this therapeutic approach stresses the importance of divine grace over and above any human effort, though both are seen as necessary.

The themes of therapy and psychology permeate this account of Orthodox Christianity. The fundamental aim of this therapy is to cure the disease of the soul known as the Fall and to reunite humans to God. Rather than being understood as primarily a moral issue, the Fall is understood as a break in human awareness from communion with God which resulted in a fall of the entire person and, subsequently, the rest of creation. This fall away from perpetual awareness of the source of creation and towards the

awareness only of individual created things also resulted in the tyranny of thoughts, passions, the environment and the tarnishing of human likeness to God. In this understanding, sin is the state of an unhealthy soul that is plagued by patterns of thought and addictions. In order to reverse this tyrannical state and re-establish the continual awareness of God, one's awareness must return to its source in the heart where the image of God is preserved and purify the heart by guarding the entry of diverse intrusions and admitting entrance only to the memory of God. This is often aided by the use of a short, repetitive prayer such as the Jesus Prayer that will eventually lead to interior peace and communion with God, regardless of exterior circumstances.

This therapy is rooted in a wider Trinitarian cosmology that also includes the Palamite distinction between divine essence and energy. Vlachos insists that the place of the heart can only be found experientially and with the appropriate guidance and training. When inner unity and communion with God is achieved it is said that all other virtues fall into place and, for this reason, the task of Orthodox theology is first and foremost to deal with this inner healing. All social and environmental issues are the secondary results of the soul's condition since its condition affects the way humans interact with each other and their environment. One result of the healing of the soul is that one begins to understand the inner principles behind all created things, which involves seeing them as made in the image of God and not as objects to be exploited as means for one's own aims and needs.

Vlachos sees this therapeutic tradition as necessary for healing the pain and turmoil of people in today's world. He claims that through this healing of the soul one 'can cope successfully with the thoughts and thus solve his problems completely and comprehensively' (Vlachos 1994*a*: 12). For Vlachos, 'contemporary man, tired and discouraged by the various problems which torment him, is looking for rest and refreshment. Basically he is seeking a cure for his soul, as it is mainly there that he feels the problem' (Vlachos 1994*a*: 15). Sopko claims that, for Romanides, this therapy is the only possible hope for change because other candidates such as 'modern science and technology have also been inducted into the service of this sickness, especially through the exploitation of the environment which consumer economics demands' (Sopko 1998: 140). In addition to their emphasis on therapy, both authors also make analogies between the Orthodox Church and medical science and empirical methodology.

In his book *Orthodox Spirituality: A Brief Introduction*, Bishop Heirotheos Vlachos, employs the term spirituality 'so that by analysing it, a place is given to it within Orthodox tradition, whereby it can be distinguished from

other [. . .] traditions' (Vlachos 1994*b*: 12). He uses this more conventional term despite his admission that the phrase 'spiritual life' would be preferable and more appropriate. His justification for using the term spirituality is that 'in this way, on the one hand, a point of reference is offered to the contemporary man – who is more familiar with this term – and at the same time, the author is afforded the opportunity to delineate the boundaries of this term within Orthodox tradition' (12–13). The exact nature of this author's definition of spirituality is not the most important matter here, but rather his willingness to use the term for its familiarity in order to bring an Orthodox Christian understanding of it into conversation and competition with alternative versions.

This is also perhaps the case with the therapeutic and experiential language that is often used. Seeing that his basic aim is 'to help contemporary man to find his cure within the Orthodox Church', the preceding statements seem to make it clear that this aim would involve presenting this cure as relevant and comprehensible to a contemporary audience over and above other ideologies (Vlachos 1994*a*: 15–16). However, the typically ambiguous nature of the terminology of spirituality does not seem to play much of a role here since Vlachos problematizes this term and makes an effort to distinguish a unique and preferable Orthodox version. The same can be said to apply to Romanides. Sopko notes that while he first used the analogies and terminology of therapy, medicine and empirical science, later in his career he began to suggest that Orthodox life is the cure of a neurobiological short circuit between brain and heart (Sopko 1998: 140). This shift in terminology could simply suggest the changing preferences of the author, but it also could be seen as an update from the language of one science to another newer science in order to increase the appeal and relevance of his interpretation.

While Carrette and King allow for the possibility that some conceptions of spirituality and therapy could 'have important individual and social values', they consider conceptions based solely on their economic orientation (Carrette and King 2005: 141). Thus, *Selling Spirituality* does not provide room for alternative therapies with different understandings of self that may also be socially engaged. Though they see a need for alternative views of subjectivity and spirituality that do not rely on individualist and consumerist values, they place restrictions on what these views can be. They seem to have in mind only one possible redefinition of spirituality, which insists that social issues are to be solved with social cures and not by any amount of self-improvement or attention to oneself. A social therapeutic perspective like that of the theologians just mentioned seems to fall

uncomfortably between the position Carrette and King endorse and the position they denounce. This suggests room for future development of their ideas based on a more sustained consideration of *other* alternative views of self, society and therapy.

The understanding of subjectivity promoted here can be seen as the missing piece in Heelas and Woodhead's understanding of subjectivity. For Heelas and Woodhead, true subjectivity is defined by an absolute freedom from external authority and absolute reliance on inner authority, based on a particular underlying concept of self and society, which the authors do not seem to question. On the contrary, Carrette and King see the only type of constructive subjectivity as one that offers a new account of self and society and is not based on individualist and consumerist assumptions of an independent self and its ultimate inner authority.

There are several other examples of authors that interpret Orthodox spirituality as primarily therapeutic.[3] In *Gifts of the Desert* by Kyriacos Markides, Fr. Maximos, the spiritual father of the author, uses medical and therapeutic language in referring to prayer as

> the antidote against all the problems people face as a result of their isolation living in modern cities, or anywhere for that matter [and] the best resistance and inoculation of the person against atomization and loneliness. [. . .] The systematic practice of prayer will lead them to that space within themselves where God resides, where they will discover their true personhood and uniqueness. (2005: 209)

In reference to life in a monastery, Fr. Maximos echoes the remarks of Vlachos and Romanides:

> You can develop the capacity to commune with God and as a result of that you learn to commune with your fellow human beings. Once you do that you can never again experience loneliness or anxiety or the feeling of being lost. (209–10)

He also says 'the Prayer [of Jesus] can solve three fundamental existential problems that all people face': loneliness, anxiety, and fear, especially fear of death (227).

In addition to *Orthodox Psychotherapy*, Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos has written many other books with the same therapeutic emphasis. In *A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain: Discussion with a Hermit on the Jesus Prayer*, he explicitly states 'that the neptic tradition of the Church [guarding

the heart from passions] has a therapeutic value [. . .] that Christianity is not a philosophy or an ideology, but rather it is a therapeutic science and a therapeutic treatment which cures the innermost aspect of one's personality' (Vlachos 1991: 12). Vlachos claims the 'basic purpose of the Jesus prayer is to unify the whole of man "who has become fragmented"' (54).[4] His website biography states that

> [the] study of the patristic texts and particularly those of the hesychast Fathers of the Philokalia, many years of studying St. Gregory Palamas, association with the monks of the Holy Mountain, many years of pastoral experience, all brought him to the realization that Orthodox theology is a science of the healing of man and that the neptic fathers can help the modern restless man who is disturbed by many internal and existential problems.[5]

Robin Amis' *A Different Christianity* also uses this terminology to articulate the therapeutic view that 'they that are whole have no need of the physician' (Mark 2.17) as something which 'survives today in the mountain fastnesses where hermits hide' (Amis 1995: 2). Amis cites the work of Vlachos to make the claim that 'this attitude is reemerging as a growing movement that seeks to distinguish between inner and outer interpretations of Christian doctrine, and refers to the outer form as "moralistic" or sometimes "legalistic"' (3). Other, more well-known sources, such as Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, also speak of this pragmatism in relation to the Jesus Prayer: 'Because of its shortness and simplicity, it is a prayer that can be said at all times and everywhere, particularly in situations of anxiety and stress when more complex forms of prayer are impossible' (Ware 1985: 413). As seen earlier, Ware even suggests the possibility of an 'urban hesychast' who struggles with the temptations of the world, rather than the desert, using the Jesus Prayer in striving to achieve a life of constant prayer (413). While there are many other examples of therapeutic interpretations from within the Orthodox tradition, the sources mentioned show that it is not only outsiders who emphasize this therapeutic aspect of Christianity, but also many Orthodox authors.

The wider conversation on cultural and religious appropriation helps to put some of the statements regarding the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm into context. Many of the charges brought against the misappropriation of a religious practice or idea are found in discussions on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. Along with disagreements over the nature of authority and tradition, perspectives are often at odds on the proper boundaries of

these practices. Because of their shift into a more global and pluralistic world, the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm are seen by some as only appropriate for those in the Eastern Orthodox Church who have a spiritual guide, while others see them as either appropriate for any Christian or for anyone with an interest in the practices. These discussions on the proper limits of use are a natural extension of different understandings of tradition and authority. The practices are sometimes viewed as inseparably part of a wider tradition and, in this case, it is essential to keep them within this context. In other views of tradition, the practices are only helpful tools but are not viewed as essentially embedded in a tradition. This understanding allows for a wider circulation without so much concern for proper context.

The questions of individualization and psychologization are also present in literature on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. Concerns for the practices being used out of context are accompanied by warnings about individualistic interpretations that focus only on bringing peace of mind to the individual praying. Despite these warnings and as seen in the writings of many authors within the church, there is a long therapeutic tradition within the Orthodox Church that interprets the church and its practices as being a type of therapy for the soul. This tradition refers to a therapy that eliminates selfishness rather than promoting a superficial peace of mind and sense of autonomy; a therapy that involves the suffering of the soul in its purification from the passions and that aims at the transformation of all creation, beginning with the treatment of persons. Still, there is often denouncement of any use of the Jesus Prayer as a simple therapy or a technique isolated from the wider prescription of life in the Orthodox Church. Underlying all of these specific arguments is the general accusation of misappropriation and misuse of the practices, usually because the appropriation and misuse is not guided by tradition.

Chapter 9

Conclusions

In the past several chapters we have seen how contemporary discussions of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm often revolve around several specific issues that, in turn, relate to wider notions of authority and tradition. More specifically, the key themes involved have been the place of spiritual guidance in the practices, their role in a contemplative renewal of Christianity, their appropriation and reinterpretation, and the relationship of the practices to other elements of Orthodox Christianity and to prayer practices in other traditions. The question of authority and tradition, of which all of these issues are a manifestation, relates to a more general scholarly and popular debate that is occurring in many settings regarding other practices and traditions. Though the ongoing hermeneutic struggle over hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer is unique in many ways, it is also part of a larger trend of contested interpretations of various religious traditions that has been brought on by societal changes and has resulted in an intricate dance of the global and the local. This makes the current topic relevant, not only to the study of Orthodox Christianity, but to more general academic discussions pertaining to the effects of globalization on religion and wider culture.

The ways in which this case differs from other analogous situations can shed light on contrasts as well as similarities, bringing attention to important details of many shared issues that concern the wider field. As other examples of the interaction of interpretations of tradition brought about by globalization are studied, we will come to better understand the issues involved in their nuances as unique instantiations of broad processes rather than as uniform generalizations. For example, the concern over appropriation and misuse of the practices by outsiders in the Orthodox context appears in many ways similar to other cases of appropriation, but this particular concern shows some distinctiveness given the nature of the group in question. Many Orthodox sources do express concern about the exaggeration of the mystical and experiential elements of the tradition at the expense of the more ecclesiastical or dogmatic elements, especially the

invocation and use of these practices without regard to their wider context. One reason for the occasional acceptance by Orthodox authors of non-Orthodox use of the practices may be the typically evangelistic rather than ethnic emphasis of the tradition. No mention of issues such as ethnicity and blood quantum are found in Orthodox literature on the topic and the practices are not spoken of as exclusive in this sense, as they sometimes are in other instances of appropriation. There is a concern about appropriation, but it is usually expressed as a matter of the spiritual and psychological honesty and health of those using the practices. While this reasoning is also invoked in other debates on appropriation, it seems to be one of the most dominant themes in the Orthodox context. This reminds us that the issue of appropriation is not a simple affair and is not identical in its every appearance. Instead, the particular circumstances and natures of the groups in question make each situation unique such that there are many versions of appropriation.

The sheer volume of recent literature on cultural and religious appropriation vouches for the current scholarly interest in the ongoing and often precarious encounter between varying interpretations of religious beliefs and practices. This interaction can be particularly unstable when the interpretations come from quite distinct cultures. In the case of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer, the shift can be characterized as, among other things, a shift from a local to a global context. The original Orthodox monastic context can be distinguished from other settings based on its primarily oral mode of transmitting tradition in which there is an intimate and direct relationship between elder and disciple and a clearly defined understanding of authority that follows from this communication: external, normative, tradition-based. As the practices spread outside of monasteries and became popular among Orthodox laypeople, they shifted towards a more global setting with, at least potentially, a less direct and controlled transmission of the 'protocols' of the practices (Owen 2007). Writings from this first period of popularization consistently insist on having a proper guide, thus demonstrating an attempt to maintain the traditional system of transmission and ensure the continuity of interpretations and uses.

In the current Orthodox context there is also typically an insistence on the important role of the spiritual guide and this is one way in which it is distinguishable from various other interpretations of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer. As the practices went through a second period of popularization outside both their original locations and their traditional structure of authority in the Orthodox Church, they ventured yet further into global territory. Not only were the new settings geographically removed from the

monastic centres of dissemination, but the new settings were often ideologically distinct as well. Mass publication and circulation of texts, coupled with the immigration of lay-Orthodox families into countries not historically Orthodox Christian, placed the practices in the hands of those who were not within the sphere of influence of traditional sources of authority in the Orthodox world. In this way, readers had access to Orthodox writings without Orthodox authority having access to them. Information on the practices began to emerge and spread, but it did not entail any obligations regarding their use.

This shift led the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm into a more global world in several senses. These practices became known far more widely geographically and outside of the religion and monasteries in which they originally developed. These new settings were also more ideologically diverse or pluralistic than either desert monasteries or Orthodox-majority nations. The practices became unhinged from their original interpretative tradition and their wider context. In the new settings for the practices, there was frequently no single central authority, either Bishop or spiritual guide or congregation, to whom the individual readers were accountable. If there was, it was often an authority at odds with Orthodox authorities on the topic. In more global and pluralistic settings, there was no guarantee that the practices would be interpreted in harmony with any official interpretation and there were no checks for ensuring one's interpretation was continuous with the history of the tradition. Consequently, interpretations from within these new settings often rubbed against traditional interpretations and disagreed on many of the issues on which this study has focused. The difference, as we have seen, is fundamentally a product of the various understandings of tradition and authority.

We have seen that there is value in the concept of the subjective turn or subjectivization, but that, since subjectivity and freedom are understood in various ways, as with appropriation, there is not one subjectivization but many. There has been a shift towards greater reign of the individual will in relation to beliefs and social roles, but there are currently many complex ways of balancing this demand of autonomy with the demands of traditions. One of the many examples of subjectivity and tradition coexisting is the use of the tradition of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer outside of their traditional setting. This suggests that there is not a simple progression from domination by external authority to the freedom of fully internalized authority, but rather a variety of approaches that are usually concerned with both aspects. One consequence is that subjectivity cannot be considered a natural ally only of the type of subjectivization that sees the most ultimate

imperative as issuing from the individual will. Instead, subjectivity is an issue that is inevitably confronted and navigated in distinctive ways by all religious groups, whether considered traditional or not. The subjectivization thesis is a helpful tool for looking at different interpretations of hesychasm and the Jesus Prayer, but it is helpful mainly as a starting point for discussion and an entry into a more complex understanding of these practices.

Transmission theories such as Walter Ong's (2002) have demonstrated the importance of any tradition's medium of transmission and the systemic effects caused by changes in medium. With these ideas, the history of the practices can be framed as a gradual popularization and globalization caused by a change in their medium of transmission from predominantly oral to predominantly written, with consequential widespread dissemination and translation. Their ideas also provide a point of reference to distinguish interpretations of the practices based on the type of dialogue between transmitter and transmittee allowed by the prominent medium and the proximity and relation to the authority behind a tradition. For instance, in primarily oral traditions there is a direct and reciprocal dialogue between listener and speaker and, through the give-and-take of this apprenticeship, the listener learns the hermeneutic that goes along with the story. On the other hand, as a tradition becomes more mediated, the distance between bilateral speaker and listener grows to become the typically unilateral relationship of author and reader. Interactive internet sources such as blogs and discussion boards have begun to introduce a new source of dialogue to traditional written texts, which has led to conflicts and negotiations in these sources and provided fruitful material for the present analysis. Using this foundation, we can see that changes in the dominant modes of transmission of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm have been a factor in the spread of the practices and literature about them, and have led to diverging interpretations of the practices in new and older settings and, ultimately, globally.

These issues relate to fundamental questions about authority and tradition that underlie many accounts and interpretations of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. Several theoretical approaches to authority and tradition can help to explain these accounts as well as many other changes in the contemporary religious world. It is clear that tradition has not lost its place in a globalized and pluralistic society, but that individuals have been forced to deal with tradition in different and frequently conflicting ways. In more global settings, tradition still often plays a role in interpreting the world and one's place in it but, because of competing claims for legitimacy and authority, tradition's role as an absolute arbiter of social and individual

conduct and bearer of authority comes under question. Thus, someone living in a society in which tradition does play all of these roles may interpret elements within this tradition differently than someone whose life is informed but not led by a particular tradition. In the first case, all the mandates of a tradition are considered more or less binding, but in the second, certain elements may be emphasized or absent depending on the will and discrimination of the individual. While both of these cases are idealized, they depend on actual strategies for dealing with tradition, either as fully authoritative over all aspects of life or partially authoritative over certain aspects, with other authorities such as self-determination or the voice of the state filling in the gaps.

Examining the interpretative shifts and conflicts brought about by the global spread of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm through immigration and the dissemination and translation of texts, this book has focused on the role that understandings of authority and tradition have played in this process. The multiform uses of these traditional practices outside of their original context attest to the ways in which a particular tradition can be continually reworked in various settings and entail different understandings of the nature of authority and its relation to tradition. By focusing on the specific practices of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm, familiar theoretical concepts such as authority, tradition, appropriation and globalization are employed in a new setting. This broadens the applicability and significance of these concepts, while bringing to them the distinctiveness of these specific practices and the controversies around them. In addition, general theories of religious appropriation are more finely tuned by their application to the present topic. The study of the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm will also hopefully benefit from a work that focuses more on theoretical models than on history and theology in order to better understand the current state of the practices in a global society.

Notes

Chapter 1

[1] Throughout this book, the phrase 'Orthodox Christianity' and its cognates will be preferred to other common designators such as 'Eastern Orthodox Christianity'. The many qualities that the term 'Eastern' often invokes will be further discussed in Chapter 7. Additionally, since there are no references to Orthodox Judaism in this thesis, when the terms 'Orthodox' and 'Orthodoxy' are used they should be assumed to refer to Orthodox Christianity.

[2] See Irenee Hausherr's The Name of Jesus (1978), the theological history by Lev Gillet (or 'A Monk of the Eastern Church') titled The Jesus Prayer (1987) and numerous works by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware (1966, 1986a, 1986b). These and several other texts will be the primary works used to introduce the present topic in the remainder of the section.

[3] The most popular general introduction to the Orthodox Christian Church is Metropolitan Kallistos Ware's The Orthodox Church (1993). This text does not focus specifically on the Jesus Prayer, but acts as a good general reader on historical and theological points in Orthodox Christianity and is updated fairly often.

[4] I first encountered this in the tension between Franny and Zooey's perspectives on the Jesus Prayer in the novel Franny and Zooey (1962) by J.D. Salinger late in 2002.

[5] Other works on authority have been consulted without playing an integral part in the theorizing. See Lincoln (1994) and Sennett (1980).

Chapter 2

[1] Metropolitan Kallistos Ware is by far the most prolific scholar on the Jesus Prayer and hesychasm. The reliance of this chapter on his works is very much recognized and acknowledged, but it is an inevitable result of his overwhelming prominence in this area of study.

[2] For a contemporary and very thorough history of the concept of theosis in Greek thought, see Norman Russell's The Doctrine of Deification in the Greek Patristic Tradition (2004); also the theological overview in Emil Bartos' Deification in Eastern Orthodox Theology (1999).

[3] The Jesus Prayer is often distinguished by its ubiquity in hesychastic practice from other, more optional, techniques that include breathing, posture, and the like. In these cases, the Jesus Prayer is not likely to be included under the heading 'technique'.

[4] See Hausherr's The Name of Jesus (1978) for a historical study of the use of the name of Jesus in early Christian history.
[5] Several examples of these passages are Gen. 32.28–9, Judg. 13.18, Acts 13.9.

Chapter 3

[1] Gillet believes the name was first used alone and Hausherr sees the Jesus Prayer as an abbreviation of penthos. Ware claims that the sources point to the initial use of the name of Jesus in a longer formula (Gillet 1987: 17–18; Hausherr 1978: 104; Ware 1985: 406).
[2] Mount Athos, otherwise known as Agion Oros, or the Holy Mountain, is a monastic republic located on a peninsula in the Northern Greek province of Chalkidiki that contains dozens of Orthodox monasteries. It has hosted monasteries since at least the ninth century and is known for its tight restrictions on visitors. Its exclusivity in limiting access to outsiders has probably contributed to the preservation of its uniqueness. For an in-depth study of Mount Athos, see Speake (2003) and Sherrard (1960).
[3] This is also seen in the central role of the mystery or sacrament of confession in both lay and monastic Orthodox life.
[4] Under the category of oral transmission, I include other forms of direct communication such as learning by example and mirroring, and the like. The term oral primarily indicates a kind of transmission that is direct and unmediated.
[5] For example, it is both a reaction against a perceived threat to the institution of monasticism and a form of resistance to Ottoman occupation or the rationalism of the Western European Enlightenment. Some note the fact that 'the time of writing of a great number of the books on mental prayer coincides with the time of the special decline of mental prayer in the monasteries' (Brianchaninov 1965: 42).

Chapter 4

[1] One example of this presence is the Cistercian monastery of New Melleray in Dubuque, Iowa whose website often mentions the prayer (http://newmelleray.org/index.asp?menu=primer07) (accessed 1 April 2010).
[2] http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org (accessed 1 April 2010).
[3] Nouwen has also written a book about using icons in prayer. See Nouwen (1975).
[4] http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/better/better05b.htm (accessed February 2008).
[5] http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/resting.htm (accessed February 2008)
[6] http://wccm.org/item.asp?recordid=comments177&pagestyle=default (accessed 1 April 2010).
[7] http://www.wccm.org/item.asp?recordid=meditatioD04&pagestyle=Default (accessed 1 April 2010).
[8] http://www.wccm.org/images/PDF/harris.pdf (pp. 166–7, 169, 174) (accessed 1 April 2010).
[9] http://www.wccm.org/images/JMCassiantoMain3.htm (accessed 1 April 2010).

[10] http://wccm.org/item.asp?recordid=kallistos&pagestyle=default (accessed 1 April 2010).

[11] http://www.interfaithstudies.org/spirituality/caveoftheheart.html (accessed 1 April 2010).

[12] Though Billy does add a significant amount of original commentary, the publishing information regarding the authorship of the book could give the impression that he is not the editor, but the author of both the commentary and the text.

[13] Another interesting phenomenon to note is the occurrence of mass conversions in recent years of those from Evangelical groups into the Orthodox Church. See Gillquist (2002).

[14] http://livingwaterfromanancientwell.blogspot.com (accessed 1 April 2010).

[15] http://www.growcenter.org/AEFConferenceInformation.htm (accessed February 2008).

[16] http://desertpastor.typepad.com/paradoxology/2006/12/page/2/ (accessed 1 April 2010).

[17] http://www.ymsp.org/resources/ancient_future_article.html (accessed Spring 2009).

[18] http://www.ymsp.org/about/index.html (accessed Spring 2009).

[19] http://www.ymsp.org/resources/ancient_future_article.html (accessed Spring 2009).

[20] http://apprising.org/2006/03/24/contemplative-prayer-and-meditation/ (accessed 1 April 2010).

[21] For several more examples of articles of this kind that criticize the recent interest in Christian contemplative and mystical practice, see:
http://www.lighthousetrailsresearch.com/blog/index.php (accessed 1 April 2010).
http://www.svchapel.org/resources/articles/23-doctrine/545-mysticism-part-1 (accessed 1 April 2010).
http://www.onetruthministries.com/MysticsMisuseofScripture.htm (accessed 1 April 2010).
http://www.bereanbeacon.org/eastern_orthodoxy.php (accessed 1 April 2010).

[22] This is the same article commented on by Thomas Merton in his Asian Journals of Thomas Merton (Burton et al. 1974).

[23] The ties between Ouspensky and the English Philokalia have been substantiated by comments made by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware at a seminar at Cambridge in 2008 regarding the history of the publication of the English Philokalia. As to this point, no work has been published about this topic.

[24] http://www.himalayaninstitute.org/ArticleRead.aspx?code=636 (accessed February 2008).

[25] http://www.himalayaninstitute.org/ArticleRead.aspx?code=799 (accessed February 2008).

Chapter 5

[1] This chapter relies on extended quotations, many of which have been preserved in their entirety to best represent the authors' own tone and style. Usernames in

discussion boards and reviews have been retained in the form in which they are found as well as the spelling and grammar of all quotes.

[2] http://www.amazon.com/review/product/0571130135/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?_encoding=UTF8&coliid=&showViewpoints=1&colid=&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending (accessed 1 April 2010).

[3] http://www.amazon.com/review/product/0060630175/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?_encoding=UTF8&coliid=&showViewpoints=1&colid=&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending (accessed 1 April 2010).

[4] http://www.monachos.net/forum/showthread.php?t=2128 (accessed 1 April 2010).

[5] http://www.monachos.net/forum/showthread.php?t=2150 (accessed 1 April 2010).

[6] http://www.praxisinstitute.net/Praxis%20Now/Church%20of%20The%20Elders/Christian%20Fourthway.htm (accessed 1 April 2010).

[7] http://www.monachos.net/forum/showthread.php?t=2279 (accessed 1 April 2010).

[8] http://forum.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=messageboard.viewThread&entryID=30472454&groupID=104477822&adTopicID=27&Mytoken=1D31881C-0DFE-42D9-AD1F4D9B4F7DA31E35732375 (accessed 1 April 2010).

[9] http://markjberry.blogs.com/way_out_west/2006/01/the_jesus_praye.html (accessed 1 April 2010).

[10] http://tallskinnykiwi.typepad.com/tallskinnykiwi/2005/05/monasticism_in_.html (accessed 1 April 2010).

Chapter 6

[1] The authors characterize the simultaneous presence of these trends as 'coexistence' (2005: 10, 77).

[2] A popular view that Heelas and Woodhead say comes much closer to their own view distinguishes these realms based on the 'this-worldliness' of truth in spirituality and 'other-worldliness' of truth in religion (6).

[3] Indeed, the prediction of a 'Spiritual Revolution' in many ways parallels the prediction of a coming New Age within the holistic milieu.

[4] This idea is informed by John B. Thompson's discussion of aspects of tradition and Matthew Wood's distinction between formative and non-formative habitus, which are both explored in the subsequent chapter (Thompson 1996; Wood 2007).

[5] This creation of the local can be seen even in the early history of Christian monasticism when those who became the Desert Fathers and Mothers fled the cities and populated areas after the establishment of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. They fled into the deserts in order to escape a perceived laxity and moral decline in institutionalized Christianity, but also to preserve and recreate the self-image and local character of Christians during the persecutions in the face of an increasingly globalized Christianity in the empire.

[6] This is an issue that will come up again later in relation to the idea of cultural appropriation.

Chapter 7

[1] Though this work by Shils is still the most comprehensive general study of tradition from a sociological standpoint, it will not play a dominant part in the current discussion since several of its relevant themes have been successfully expanded by other authors since the publication of the work. These themes will be explored in the remainder of the present chapter.

[2] In Pelikan's example of the denial of tradition, he points to Thomas Jefferson and Ralph Waldo Emerson as having misunderstood tradition as traditionalism and not recognizing its importance and pervasiveness, even in their own views.

[3] http://www.amazon.com/Mountain-Silence-Search-Orthodox-Spirituality/dp/0385500920/ref=pd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1228924177&sr=8–1 (accessed 01 April 2010).

[4] http://www.amazon.com/review/product/0571130135/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?_encoding=UTF8&coliid=&showViewpoints=1&colid=&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending (accessed 01 April 2010).

[5] http://www.amazon.com/Path-Salvation-Manual-Spiritual-Transformation/dp/1887904514/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1197801487&sr=8–1

Chapter 8

[1] For a thorough exploration of cultural appropriation in the Lakota context see Suzanne Owen's thesis 'Native American Spirituality: Its Appropriation and Incorporation Amongst Native and non-Native Peoples' (2007).

[2] Also see Brown's Who Owns Native Culture? (2003).

[3] One example of many such titles is Victor Mihailoff's Breaking the Chains of Addiction: How to Use Ancient Orthodox Spirituality to Free our Minds and Bodies from all Addictions (2005).

[4] Although this therapeutic interpretation does not always explicitly mention hesychasm or the Jesus Prayer, they are almost always implied by terms such as silence, nepsis, prayer, etc.

[5] http://www.pelagia.org/htm/b0niben.htm (accessed 1 April 2010).

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